Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures

Biblical Interpretation Series

Editors in Chief

Paul Anderson
Yvonne Sherwood

Editorial Board

A.K.M. Adam – Roland Boer – Musa Dube
Jennifer L. Koosed – Vernon Robbins
Annette Schellenberg – Carolyn J. Sharp
Johanna Stiebert – Duane Watson
Ruben Zimmermann

VOLUME 127

The titles published in this series are listed at brill.com/bins

Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures

A Reading Through Metaphor

By

Alison Ruth Gray

BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2014

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gray, Alison Ruth.
Psalm 18 in words and pictures : a reading through metaphor / by Alison Ruth Gray.
pages cm. — (Biblical interpretation series, ISSN 0928-0731 ; VOLUME 127)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-90-04-25504-3 (hardback : alk. paper)—ISBN 978-90-04-26321-5 (e-book) 1. Bible. Psalms, XVIII—Language, style. 2. Metaphor in the Bible. 3. Bible. Psalms, XVIII—Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title.

BS145018th .G73 2013
223'.2077—dc23

2013034914

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0928-0731
ISBN 978-90-04-25504-3 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-26321-5 (e-book)

Copyright 2014 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Global Oriental, Hotei Publishing, IDC Publishers and Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.

Brill has made all reasonable efforts to trace all rights holders to any copyrighted material used in this work. In cases where these efforts have not been successful the publisher welcomes communications from copyright holders, so that the appropriate acknowledgements can be made in future editions, and to settle other permission matters.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

To Brett and Thomas

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ix
Index of Diagrams and Illustrations xi
Abbreviations xiii

1 Introduction 1

2 Towards a Complementary Approach to Biblical Metaphor Exegesis 9
A Clarification of Terminology 9
Navigating through Theories and Approaches to Metaphor 17
Complementary Theories of Meaning 28

3 Setting Psalm 18 in Context 35
Authorship and Date 38
Unity, Form and Composition 40
Sitz im Leben 44
Sitz im Buch i) Psalm 18 in Book I of the Psalter 50
Sitz im Buch ii) The Song of David in the Books of Samuel 52

4 Translation and Exegesis of Psalm 18.1, 2–7 55
Words and Pictures in Verse 1 56
Words and Pictures in Verses 2–3 58
Interpretation: vv. 2–3 66
Words and Pictures in Verses 4–7 68
Interpretation: vv. 4–7 76

5 Translation and Exegesis of Psalm 18.8–20 79
Words and Pictures in Verses 8–16 81
Interpretation: vv. 8–16 104
Words and Pictures in Verses 17–20 105
Interpretation: vv. 17–20 112

6 Translation and Exegesis of Psalm 18.21–30 115
Words and Pictures in Verses 21–25 115
Interpretation: vv. 21–25 121
Words and Pictures in Verses 26–30 122
Interpretation: vv. 26–30 134

7 Translation and Exegesis of Psalm 18.31–37 137
Words and Pictures in Verses 31–37 137
Interpretation: vv. 31–37 154

8 Translation and Exegesis of Psalm 18.38–51 157
Words and Pictures in Verses 38–46 157
Interpretation: vv. 38–46 175
Words and Pictures in Verses 47–51 175
Interpretation: vv. 47–51 187

9 Interwoven Threads in Psalm 18 189
Metaphorical Interplay 189
A Re-assessment of Psalm 18's Unity 202
Metaphors in a Different Frame: The Purpose(s) of Psalm 18 204

10 Conclusions 207

Bibliography 213
Index of Subjects 227
Index of Authors 229
Index of Textual References 232

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present book is a revision of my doctoral thesis, presented to the University of Cambridge in 2012. My heartfelt thanks go to my doctoral supervisor, Prof. Graham Davies, for his tireless support, encouragement and guidance through a number of eventful years. He has been an inspiration to work with: patient and kind, generous with his time, meticulous with details, and gracious in giving counsel. I can only hope to emulate the humility with which he approaches biblical scholarship. I am also grateful to my examiners, Prof. William Horbury and Dr David Reimer, for their helpful suggestions and comments on my thesis.

I am indebted to the British Arts and Humanities Research Council for the Doctoral Award which facilitated the research for my thesis, and to the community at Tyndale House, Cambridge, where I completed the final stages of this book. My thanks go to a number of individuals who have generously given their time to proof-read and comment on earlier drafts of the material presented here: Andrew Crick, Alison Fulford, Hilary Marlow, Jenny Roberts, and Sue Sainsbury. Special thanks are due to Selwyn College, which has supported me throughout my PhD, and particularly to Dr Andrew Chester, my first teacher and mentor when I began to study the Bible as an undergraduate. Without his support and encouragement I would not have continued to post-graduate study. I am also deeply thankful to the church communities of St Michael and All Angels, Berkhamsted, and St Michaels, St Albans, for their help and encouragement in countless ways. My thanks, of course, go also to Brill publishing house, especially to Liesbeth Hugenholtz and Diana Steele, for patiently guiding me through the process of publication.

Finally, none of this endeavour would have been possible without my family. I am deeply grateful to my parents, Nancy and Nigel, for their constant encouragement and support. Above all, I want to thank my husband, Brett, and my son, Thomas, to whom I dedicate this book, for their unwavering confidence in me, and for cheering me along the way.

INDEX OF DIAGRAMS AND ILLUSTRATIONS[1]

Fig. 1	Model of Conceptual Blending	26
Fig. 2	Working model for interpreting metaphors in the Psalms	33
Fig. 3	Frames of Reference for Psalm 18	37
Fig. 4	Frames of Reference for Psalm 18 within the Psalter	51
Fig. 5	Frames of Reference for the psalm in 2 Samuel 22	53
Fig. 6	Model of interpreting Ps 18. 2	60
Fig. 7	Relief from Nimrud (745-727 B.C.E.)	64
Fig. 8	Enamelled seal of Ashur (888-884 B.C.E.)	95
Fig. 9	Relief from the tomb of Thutmose IV in Thebes (1422–1413 B.C.E.)	150
Fig. 10	Orthostat from Ashurnasipal II's palace (883–859 B.C.E.)	151
Fig. 11	Narmer palette (ca. 2850 B.C.E.)	160
Fig. 12	Relief from Abu Simbel: Ramses II (1301–1234 B.C.E.)	162
Fig. 13	Tomb wall painting from Abd el Qurna	171
Fig. 14	Relief from Edfu: Ptolemy IX / Alexander I (107–88 B.C.E.)	198

[1] Figs. 1–6 are the author's own diagrams. Figs. 7–9, 11–14 are reprinted from Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, repr. ed. 1997) by kind permission of the publisher. Fig. 10 is image AN234677001 (BM 124536) by kind permission of the British Museum free image service.

ABBREVIATIONS

Books of the Hebrew Bible

Gen	Genesis	Hab	Habakkuk
Exod	Exodus	Zeph	Zephaniah
Lev	Leviticus	Hag	Haggai
Num	Numbers	Zech	Zechariah
Deut	Deuteronomy	Mal	Malachi
Josh	Joshua	Ps / Pss	Psalm / Psalms
Judg	Judges	Job	Job
1–2 Sam	1–2 Samuel	Prov	Proverbs
1–2 Kgs	1–2 Kings	Ruth	Ruth
Isa	Isaiah	Song	Song of Songs
Jer	Jeremiah	Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Ezek	Ezekiel	Lam	Lamentations
Hos	Hosea	Esth	Esther
Joel	Joel	Dan	Daniel
Obad	Obadiah	Ezra	Ezra
Jon	Jonah	Neh	Nehemiah
Mic	Micah	1–2 Chr	1–2 Chronicles
Nah	Nahum		

General Abbreviations

adj.	Adjective
Akk.	Akkadian
aph.	Aphel
Arab.	Arabic
Aram.	Aramaic
ASV	American Standard Version
cf.	*confer*, compare
col.	Column
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
ESV	English Standard Version
Eth.	Ethiopic

fem.	Feminine
fig.	Figure
GNV	Geneva Bible (1599)
HB	Hebrew Bible
Heb.	Hebrew
hi.	Hiphil
htp.	Hithpael
ibid.	*ibidem*, in the same place
KJV	King James Bible
LXX	Septuaginta: id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes, A. Rahlfs (ed.) (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935; 4th ed. 2005).
LXX^{L}	Septuagint Lucianic recension
masc.	Masculine
Mid. Heb.	Middle Hebrew
Midr. Teh.	Midrash Tehillim
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
MT	Massoretic Text (of the Old Testament)
n.	Note
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
ni.	Niphal
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NJPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
pf.	Perfect
pi.	Piel
pl.	Plural
postbibl.	Postbiblical
pu.	Pual
repr.	Reprinted
RSV	Revised Standard Version
sg.	Singular
Tigr.	Tigre
Ug.	Ugaritic

Vg.	*Biblia Sacra Vulgata Editio Quinta,* R. Weber and R. Gryson (eds.) (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007).
Vg. iuxta Hebr.	Vulgate iuxta Hebraeos

Secondary Sources

AHw	*Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, W. Von Soden, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965–1981).
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament,* J. B. Pritchard (ed.), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed. with supplement), J. B. Pritchard (ed.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).
ARAB	*Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia,* Vols I and II, D. D. Luckenbill (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926).
BDB	Francis Brown (with S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs), *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979).
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia,* ed. R. Kittel, 5th edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990).
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago Oriental Institute, 1956–).
CoS	*The Context of Scripture* (3 vols.), W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (eds.) (*1: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World; 2: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World; 3: Archival Documents from the Biblical World*; Leiden: Brill, 2003).
DCH	*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew,* ed. D. J. A. Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–).
DULAT	Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (tr. W. G. E. Watson, Leiden: Brill, 2003).
Ges[18]	W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (*1–6 Lfg.*), Auflage 18. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1987–2010).

GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, tr. A. E. Cowley (2nd. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910).
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden; New York: Brill, 1994–1999).
Hatch and Redpath	Hatch, E. and Redpath, H. A., *Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament* 2 vols. (Oxford, suppl. 1906; repr., 3 vols. in 2, Grand Rapids, 1983).
Jastrow	Jastrow, M. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1950).
KBL	Koehler, L. And W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros* (2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 1958).
KTU	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (*Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palaestinas; KTU: second, enlarged edition*), M. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartin (eds.) (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 1995).

N. B. English translations of the Hebrew text are the author's own unless otherwise indicated. Hebrew versification is used throughout. LXX Ps 17 = Ps 18 in the MT.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"What has been written with imagination must be read with imagination".[1]

Metaphors in the Psalms

Using the words and pictures in Psalm 18 as an example, the present study is concerned with the importance of 'seeing'[2] the metaphors in one particular psalm and how the translation and exegesis of the psalm might be affected by focussing on its word-pictures. Interpretations of the Hebrew Psalms that do not take seriously the ambiguity, creativity and power of metaphor are in danger not only of ignoring the poetic craftsmanship of the psalmists, but also of being incomplete.[3] Indeed, Adele Berlin suggests that "metaphor is as important a constituent of poetry as parallelism, and that they both achieve their effects through the juxtaposition of things that are alike and yet different".[4]

The images painted by words in biblical poetry create scenes in the mind of the reader, but the question of how these relate to the mental scenes intended by its writers is often not fully explored: "to understand the Bible's use of imagery is to perceive the network of relationships in the biblical text and in the view of the world that it represents. Therein lies the meaning of the biblical message".[5] Part of the task of metaphor exegesis is therefore to find the appropriate tools for accessing the worldviews of the biblical writers, through an understanding of their words and pictures.[6] Since metaphors are part of the very fabric of the Psalms, it may seem surprising that the subject has been neglected for so long.[7] However, when one looks at the history of philosophical treatments of metaphor,

---

[1] Schökel 1988: 104 (cit. in Brown 2002: 3).
[2] Cf. the title of William Brown's book, *Seeing the Psalms* (2002).
[3] The term 'ambiguity' refers here to a metaphor's 'openness' or receptivity to a number of different interpretations.
[4] Berlin 1997: 35.
[5] Berlin 1997: 35.
[6] Cf. Van Wolde 2003b; Godawa 2009.
[7] Berlin 1997: 26.

the reason becomes clear. Metaphor has suffered an unfortunate history of disrepute, particularly since the Enlightenment, either being relegated to the category of empty and even frivolous rhetoric, or seen as purely emotive language, devoid of cognitive content and therefore utterly dispensable. It has taken several centuries to shake off such a critical legacy. Biblical studies is now one of a number of disciplines, including literary studies, linguistics, psychology, philosophy and theology, which has witnessed an explosion of renewed interest in metaphor over recent decades, and so finally this considerable gap has begun to be filled in.[8] In fact, this forms part of a wider movement of interest in visual, iconic and pictorial approaches to ancient texts, which has also become prominent in Classics and New Testament study.[9]

William Brown's *Seeing the Psalms* has made a significant contribution to this field of study, approaching the Psalms through the hermeneutical lens of metaphor. In a number of ways Brown builds on Othmar Keel's seminal work on ancient Near Eastern iconography and symbolism in drawing proper attention to the pictorial 'landscape' of the Psalter.[10] Brown's impressive survey identifies clusters or constellations of related metaphors which reverberate throughout the Psalter, looking at associated word-fields and drawing on imagery from ancient Near Eastern literature and iconography. By identifying various 'source' and 'target' domains, he unpacks the iconic content of a number of key metaphorical images in the Psalms, such as refuge, pathway, tree, etc.[11] He also encourages scholars to study the 'iconic structure' of a psalm, "by identifying the various ways particular images and metaphors interact in the text".[12]

Alec Basson takes this kind of approach in his study of divine metaphors in a selection of lament psalms.[13] In each case he describes the psalm's literary genre, its poetic and stylistic features, and gives a contextual analysis of the divine metaphors. Like Brown he pays attention to the conceptual background and world-view of these metaphors, but he also goes into a detailed exploration of the cognitive relationship between the depictions of God and the psalmist's experiences—what he

---

[8] Notable publications include e.g. Schökel 1988; Klingbeil 1999; Brown 2002; Nielsen 2002; Basson 2006; Van Hecke 2010. See the extensive list in Klingbeil 2010: 119 n. 16.

[9] See Hirsch-Luipold 2002, 4–5 n. 12; 8 n. 20.

[10] Keel 1978.

[11] The terms 'source' and 'target' domains are taken from the work of Lakoff, Johnson and Turner, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

[12] Brown 2002: 14.

[13] Basson 2006.

calls a 'cognitive-anthropological' perspective.[14] However, Basson leaves the reader without any kind of synthesis of the fascinating insights that he gives into the conceptual world-views of the psalmists. He makes no concluding remarks about each psalm in terms of the interaction between metaphors within the psalm or about the psalm's overall message. In contrast, the present study, by focussing on one particular psalm, is able to focus in much more detail on the interaction between, and significance of, each word in a metaphor, and of each image or impression created by those words.

The importance of analysing metaphors in the context of a complete literary unit has already been noted in relation to biblical prose narratives.[15] In the poetry of the Psalms, such an approach not only reveals more of the psalmist's artistic genius but also allows levels of meaning to surface which would otherwise remain obscured. In the word-painting of the psalm as a whole, the psalmist uses metaphors to help us 'see' something in the light of something else. By interlocking, overlapping and superimposing different images, the poet allows scenes and images in the psalm to shift in and out of focus like colours in a kaleidoscope. This skilful interweaving of words and pictures is often ignored and yet can have an enormous bearing on a psalm's message. By exploring both the 'word-fields' and the 'image-fields' that are at work within the psalm, particular themes and 'messages' can be identified.

Psalm 18

Psalm 18, the third longest psalm in the Hebrew Bible (HB), provides particularly fertile ground for a study of metaphor. Although the psalm's vibrant imagery, mythical language, hyperbole and word-play have not gone unnoticed by commentators, previous studies have tended to focus on one of its distinctive features, such as its detailed theophany passage,[16] or its almost identical copy in 2 Sam 22,[17] the question of its *Sitz im Leben* and relation to the cult,[18] or its irregular form and structure which have

[14] Basson 2006: 3.
[15] Weiss 2006: 33–34.
[16] Jeremias 1965; Gandiya 1997; Hunter 1987; Maré 2010.
[17] Cross & Freedman 1953; Schmuttermayr 1971. This psalm is the longest poetic parallel in the HB.
[18] Eaton 1955; Weiser 1961.

led to unresolved disputes over its unity and composition, dating and authorship.[19]

The most detailed and thorough exegetical and theological analysis of Psalm 18 is an unpublished dissertation by R. B. Chisholm, in which he offers his own translation and exegetical comments on the psalm, section by section.[20] A real strength of this impressive study is Chisholm's use of biblical texts and ancient Near Eastern literary parallels to shed light on particular grammatical, stylistic, or pictorial aspects of the psalm, and a number of references in the present study are attributed to him. However, although he mentions imagery throughout the exegesis he often misses the way in which key words and images interact throughout the psalm. As a summary statement of the psalm's 'message', Chisholm offers the following:

> David praises Yahweh, his incomparable, just and faithful protector-deliverer, because he has powerfully intervened to rescue his loyal servant from his enemies, enabling him to defeat his foes and assume a position of suzerainty over nations.[21]

A fuller understanding of the flexibility and ambiguity of the metaphors in Psalm 18 challenges this rather reductionist assumption that it is even possible to define the psalm in terms of a single 'message'. The approach in this study offers instead an insight into the polyphony of messages that the psalm is able to bear and express.

Literary approaches to the psalm have either focussed on specific metaphors in the psalm or have simply by-passed a discussion of them.[22] Among those who explicitly focus on the importance of metaphor for interpreting Psalm 18 is M. Klingbeil, who takes a thematic approach to the imagery of God as warrior and God of Heaven in the Psalms and in ancient Near Eastern iconography.[23] In many ways his is also a method that focuses on words and pictures. He offers what he calls 'semantic notes' for each psalm under consideration, which comprise a brief survey of the different uses of verbs and nouns in the psalm. He also draws attention to the relationship between metaphors and iconography, and raises important issues about the use of iconography in biblical interpretation.

---

[19] F.-L. Hossfeld 1986; K.-P. Adam 2001.

[20] Chisholm 1983.

[21] Chisholm 1983: 118.

[22] E.g. Kuntz 1983; Berry 1993. Some even exclude Ps 18 from consideration because of its length (e.g. Brettler 1993).

[23] Klingbeil 1999.

However, his focus on images and motifs in individual psalms (including Ps 18) seems to ignore the particularity of the linguistic expressions and the interrelationship between them in the context of the whole psalm.[24]

J. H. Hunter also highlights the importance of metaphor amongst other literary features, in his examination of the structural and stylistic characteristics of a selection of theophany passages.[25] Hunter identifies Psalm 18 as a soteriological myth and views the whole psalm through this lens, considering the theophany in Ps 18.8–16 to be a 'mytheme', whose 'metaphorical truth' is the salvation of the individual.[26] While such a literary approach can lead to some interesting observations, if used exclusively, it cannot do justice to the historical and theological complexities of the psalm.

In the case of Psalm 18, it leads him not only to skim over the interpretation of individual metaphors within the theophany, but also to ignore the potential interaction between the theophany and other images within the psalm. The focus of the theophany, far from being on the individual, is rather on Yahweh's terrifying presence and glorious power as a warrior. By focussing on the category 'soteriological myth', Hunter not only misses the particular focus of individual metaphors and their place within the whole, but loses sight of the discourse as a whole and therefore also of its message.[27]

The present study therefore aims to take a thorough look at the words and pictures that make up the whole psalm, with a particular focus on how these are woven together into a literary unit, and what this reveals about the structure, purpose, and theology of the psalm. Rather than offering yet another 'approach' to Psalms interpretation, this study is intended to promote metaphor-focussed exegesis as a complementary partner to a variety of hermeneutical approaches to the Psalms.

---

[24] His article on Pss 18 and 144 (Klingbeil 2010) will be discussed later on in the thesis.

[25] Hunter 1987.

[26] Hunter 1987: 34.

[27] For Ricoeur, the task of hermeneutics is "to use the dialectics of discourse and work, or performance and competence, as a mediation at the service not of the code, but of the message" (Ricoeur 1975: 70). In other words, the 'codes' (literary categories such as 'soteriological myth'), with their rules, formal structure and identifiable characteristics, *mediate* the message, but do not constitute the message itself.

Outline

Metaphor is an extremely complex cognitive and linguistic phenomenon and the debates it has generated among scholars in philosophy, linguistics and literature seem to be inexhaustible.[28] Consequently, there is an increasing number of theoretical considerations and models for biblical scholars to draw upon, and their hermeneutical potential is as rich and diverse as the number of contemporary approaches to biblical studies.[29] Whilst drawing on the insights of a range of other disciplines is a necessary part of hermeneutics, biblical scholars often find themselves struggling to keep up with the developments in metaphor theories, or become entangled in terminological knots, or run into difficulties trying to marry theoretical discussions with exegetical practice.[30]

The aim of Chapter 2 is therefore to untangle some of the confusion caused by language about metaphor. A simplified description of metaphor as 'an analogical word-picture' is presented as a basic working model for interpreting biblical metaphors. This is explained in relation to other word-pictures (metonymy and synecdoche), simile, models, analogy, and symbol. Various theories of metaphor are examined, with a discussion of the limitations and potential pitfalls of particular theories when applied to biblical translation and exegesis. In Chapter 3 there is a brief discussion of hermeneutical challenges presented by the Psalms in general, followed by a survey of issues concerning Ps 18's authorship, date, form, unity, *Sitz im Leben* and *Sitze im Buch*, in order to set the metaphor exegesis in context.

The central part of the thesis, Chapters 4–8, unpacks the psalm's words and pictures, proceeding section by section, paying close attention to the lexical and conceptual associations of individual words in the text, to related image-fields in the HB, and to the interaction between different images within the psalm. The metaphor exegesis involves exploring verbal and conceptual parallels in ancient Near Eastern literature and iconography, taking due care to examine the specific contexts in which these words or pictures are used, in order to avoid 'reading in' symbolism or meaning.

---

[28] See e.g. Ricoeur 1975; Stern 2000; Fludernik 2011.

[29] For a selection of some of the recent work in the area of biblical metaphor see Klingbeil 2010: 115–123.

[30] Cf. Weiss' critical review of biblical research on metaphor (Weiss 2006: 20–32).

This is followed in Chapter 9 by a summary of the psalm's themes and 'messages' that emerge as a result of metaphor exegesis, and a discussion of how different external literary frames affect the interpretation of particular metaphors. The study then concludes in Chapter 10 with a reflection on the advantages and limitations of a metaphor-oriented hermeneutical approach to the Psalms, and on potential avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS A COMPLEMENTARY APPROACH TO BIBLICAL METAPHOR EXEGESIS

A Clarification of Terminology

One of the deepest sources of confusion in theoretical discussions of metaphor is the language used to describe what metaphor is and how it works. Considering the variety of philosophical and linguistic terms employed in debates about the nature of metaphor, and the inconsistency with which these are often used and understood, it is little wonder that biblical scholars find it difficult to bridge the gap between metaphor theories and the exegesis of particular biblical metaphors.[1] It is tempting to avoid defining or identifying different types of linguistic expression, or to use the generic (and conveniently nebulous) term 'imagery' to describe a range of figurative language in biblical texts. However, recognising a particular expression as a metaphor, and taking how it works and what it can do seriously, can have a huge impact on the translation and interpretation of a text. This section will therefore address those theoretical questions and debates about metaphor that directly influence biblical exegesis, and will highlight potential pitfalls of certain theories and their respective vocabularies.

Metaphor as 'an Analogical Word-picture'

The basic understanding of metaphor in this thesis is that it is a particular kind of 'word-picture'. This definition is akin to Macky's description of metaphor as a "photo-landscape symbol",[2] and resonates with Aristotle's explanation that metaphor sets "the scene before our eyes".[3] The term 'analogical word-picture', whilst emphasising the nature of metaphor as a form of verbal art, distinguishes it from other types of verbal art by

---

[1] Weiss 2006: 20–32.
[2] Macky 1990: 102–114.
[3] Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1410 b 33), cit. in Ricoeur 2003: 38.

identifying analogy as the underlying basis of its *modus operandi*, which will be discussed in more detail further on.[4]

The definition of metaphor as an analogical word-picture aims to provide not only a basic descriptive model that is reasonably transparent, but also one that can guide the process of biblical exegesis, without getting unduly weighed down by lists of technical terms. It stresses the importance of paying attention both to the particular words in the metaphor, to the picture(s) created by its words, and to the way in which these are related. If either the pictorial aspect of metaphor (the image it creates) or its verbal dimension (the way in which it operates through interactions between individual words within a text) is ignored, the full force and meaning of the metaphor will be obscured. This focus on metaphors as analogical word-pictures draws together insights from lexical semantics, pragmatics and cognitive linguistics, whose particular contribution to metaphor interpretation will be explored throughout this section.

Other Kinds of Word-picture

In order to see what is 'special' about metaphor's verbal art, two other types of figurative language will be compared—metonymy and synecdoche. Metonymy is the use of an attribute or adjunct of a subject to represent that subject, e.g. 1 Sam 15.24 reads literally 'I have transgressed the mouth of the Lord', meaning 'I have transgressed the *commandments* of the Lord', since commands are spoken with one's mouth.

Synecdoche, sometimes classed as a form of metonymy,[5] is a figure of language that uses a part to represent the whole (species for genus) or the whole to represent a part (genus for species), e.g. in Ps 18.45 לִשְׁמַע אזן ישמעו לי 'As soon as their ears hear of me they obey me'. Here אזן 'ear' is used to represent the people: literally 'at the hearing of the ear', meaning 'when they hear'. Similarly, in Isa 5.28 גלגל 'wheel' is used instead of wagon or chariot (compare the English expression 'I've got a new set of wheels'). A common use of synecdoche in Biblical Hebrew (BH) involves פנים 'face' to represent a person, e.g. לפניו 'to his face', i.e. 'to him' (e.g. Ps 18.7).

Although these two types of figures are often called 'ornamental' or 'decorative', they can reveal the way in which a speaker or writer understands or experiences something, for example, the use of 'face' to repre-

[4] Cf. Steinhart and Kittay 1994: 43.
[5] E.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 36.

sent a person reflects our experience of looking at a person's face when talking to them.[6] In terms of biblical exegesis, it is therefore important to be aware that some metonymic expressions are worth probing more carefully to see if they reflect something of the writer's wider experience or concerns.

There are two main differences between metonymy and metaphor.[7] Firstly, metonymy uses an associated word in place of, or to 'depict' another object, person, situation, etc., whereas metaphor relies on an underlying mechanism of analogy. The words employed in a metaphor are not directly associated with the subject of the metaphor and often trigger a set of associations which cause a cognitive tension or even a dissonance, a 'semantic shock'.[8] Secondly, the function of these word-pictures is different. Metonymy primarily fulfils a referential function, whereas a metaphorical word-picture enables us to understand or 'see' one thing with the help of another. In a metaphor, words are used which rely on, or create, a resemblance and this resemblance provides additional cognitive content.[9] Aristotle regarded the art of perceiving resemblances as central to the skill of creating metaphors: "to be good at metaphor is to perceive resemblances".[10] Metaphors certainly vary enormously in terms of their vividness and 'impact', but metaphor's impact, imaginative power, and potential for semantic creativity, can go well beyond that of metonymy.

Metaphor and Simile

Metaphor is sometimes described as an elliptical simile.[11] According to this understanding, the so-called 'comparison' theory, a metaphor compares two similar things in an ornamental way (although both terms need not be present). It assumes that a metaphor can be rendered by a literal comparison without loss of meaning.[12] The following discussion of metaphor and simile will demonstrate that this understanding of metaphor is far from adequate.

The stumbling-block to clear distinctions between metaphor and simile seems to be that on one hand simile is *syntactically* different from

---

6 Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 36–7.
7 The term 'metonymy' here includes synecdoche.
8 Kearney 1998: 148.
9 Ricoeur 2003: 204–254.
10 Aristotle (*Poetics*, 1459a), cit. in Soskice 1985: 9; cf. Ricoeur 1975: 79.
11 Cf. Miller 1993; Black 1962: 35.
12 E.g. Miller 1993: 357–400.

metaphor, being signified by 'like', 'is like', 'as', 'just as', etc. but on the other hand, some similes are similar to metaphor *semantically* in a way that is difficult to define (hence Macky's term 'metaphorical similes').[13] For example, Janet Soskice uses an arresting example from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*: "Human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we are longing to move the stars to pity".[14] As she observes, it is difficult to identify precisely how it would alter the statement if we omitted the word 'like'. How can we make sense of this 'fuzzy boundary' between simile and metaphor?

The following is an adaptation of some examples used by Ortony to distinguish between a literal comparison, a simile and a metaphor:[15]

a) 'encyclopedias are like dictionaries' is a non-figurative comparison of two similar objects.
b) 'encyclopedias are like gold mines' is a simile. Syntactically it is a non-figurative comparison since 'all the words retain their meaning' and are not being used figuratively.[16] However, unlike statement a), its interpretation involves a consideration of the resemblances between two antecedently different objects, and it creates or relies upon one or more underlying conceptual models, e.g. knowledge as precious material, research as mining.[17]
c) 'encyclopedias are gold mines' is a metaphor. Like statement b), its interpretation involves a consideration of the resemblances between two antecedently different objects, and it relies on one or more underlying conceptual models, e.g. knowledge as precious material, research as mining. However, unlike statement b), the language use and meaning are figurative and the two objects in the metaphor (encyclopedias and gold mines) are superimposed on one another to create an analogical word-picture.

This explanation differs from Ortony's, which relies on the traditional dichotomy between literal and non-literal language to distinguish between a straightforward comparison and a simile. His description of a simile as a 'non-literal comparison' is misleading, because the language

---

[13] Macky 1980: 69.
[14] Soskice 1985: 58–9.
[15] Ortony 1993: 346–350.
[16] Ricoeur 2003: 220.
[17] *Contra* Soskice (1985: 58–61), who distinguishes between 'simple' or 'illustrative' similes which are incapable of further development, and 'modelling' similes which function more like metaphors, because they create a "model susceptible of considerable development". However, there are examples of both similes and metaphors which provide simple (and sometimes trite) comparisons, depending upon the richness of the underlying model, but which are usually capable of some further (albeit trivial) development.

is not being used figuratively in a simile. Although it makes use of a rich image and engages a conceptual model, it does not create a word-picture.[18] The two things being compared in the simile (encyclopedias and gold mines) are not superimposed on one another, but remain distinct. In a metaphor, an analogical word-picture, one is invited to see something *as* something else.

Wittgenstein's notion of 'seeing as' is frequently borrowed in descriptions of metaphor: metaphorical writing is a 'picturing as' that invites us to 'see' something 'as'.[19] This idea is not unlike Max Black's model of a 'filter'.[20] If one were to look at red through a blue filter, one would see not just the parts of red which can now be seen in terms of blue, but a new colour, purple. For the psalmist to say 'YHWH is my rock' (Ps 18.3) is for him to see YHWH as his rock, and to describe YHWH as one who 'trains my hands for battle' (v. 35) is to portray YHWH as a military trainer.

Metaphors, Models, Analogy, and Symbol

Metaphor, model, analogy, and symbol all enable us to view things in terms of other things, but metaphor is the only one that is necessarily linguistic.[21] The distinction between these four terms is frequently blurred and can lead to confusion and imprecision in the interpretation of biblical metaphors. Linguistic symbols are similar to metaphors, because they provide the basis for 'reasoning by analogy', as do models.[22] For example, in the metaphor 'you are my lamp' (2 Sam 22.29), the linguistic symbol 'lamp' engages the model 'God as my lamp'. If one were to analyse and interpret this metaphor, one would therefore look at the analogical relationship between 'God' and 'my lamp'.

All metaphors create or are based on underlying conceptual models. Black expresses this by engaging the model of an ice-berg: "Every metaphor

---

[18] The exception to this is when a simile actually forms part of a metaphor, as in Ps 18.34.

[19] Ricoeur 2003: 251–4.

[20] Black 1962: 39–41.

[21] The question of whether metaphor is a cognitive or linguistic phenomenon will be discussed further on.

[22] Macky 1990: 53–55; cf. Ricoeur 2003: 219. It should be noted that Macky uses the term 'symbol' in quite a distinctive way in his description of metaphor as "that figurative way of speaking (and meaning) in which one reality, the Subject, is depicted in terms that are more commonly associated with a different reality, the Symbol, which is related to it by analogy" (Macky 1990: 49).

is the tip of a submerged model".[23] The term 'root metaphor' is sometimes used to describe a literary model, for example, iconic metaphors such as 'YHWH is king', 'YHWH is warrior', 'YHWH is judge', etc.[24] The model underlying these root metaphors would be described as 'YHWH as king', 'YHWH as warrior', etc. Such examples are often referred to as root metaphors because of their capacity to organise or generate a framework of sub-metaphors.[25]

Referring to a particular 'model' or 'root metaphor' can provide a more accurate way of discussing related metaphors in a way that preserves their individuality. Sharon Moughtin-Mumby highlights such a problem in translations and discussions of sexual and marital metaphors in the prophets. She identifies a tendency in what she terms 'traditional scholarship' to treat all sexual and marital metaphors as if they refer to the same 'marriage metaphor'.[26] A discussion of 'models' rather than 'metaphors' would have clarified her argument and modified her analysis of traditional interpretations, as it is recourse to a 'marriage *model*' that has primarily led to the harmonization of sexual and marital metaphorical language, rather than an impoverished view of metaphor.[27]

However, the attempt to identify and understand particular 'root metaphors' can also lead to problems. For example, in Marc Brettler's study of Israelite kingship, and the points of comparison between God as king and earthly kings, he frequently neglects the variety of literature in which expressions of God's kingship occur, and their particular use and purpose in individual texts. In doing so, he often overlooks the possibility that other conceptual models could be engaged by the same texts.[28] Models therefore need to be handled carefully, so as not to obscure the individual content and form of different metaphors.

Can Words be 'Metaphorical'?

One of the frequent problems with theoretical discussions of metaphor and how it works is the type of examples chosen. Samuel Levin comments

---

[23] Black 1993: 30.

[24] This term was coined by S. C. Pepper (Black 1962: 239–40).

[25] Ricoeur 2003: 283ff. This idea is expressed in terms of generative analogies by Steinhart and Kittay (1994: 43).

[26] Moughtin-Mumby 2008: 6.

[27] Moughtin-Mumby 2008: 1ff. The differences between 'traditional' and 'feminist' scholarship are more nuanced than the dichotomy between substitutionary and cognitive theories of metaphor that she presents here.

[28] Brettler 1989; cf. criticisms by Aaron (2001: 33–41) and Foreman (2011: 24–25).

that the metaphors used are often simplistic or 'run-of the-mill' and there is little engagement with rich and complex poetic metaphors.[29] Max Black, whose 'interaction' theory is often referred to in studies of biblical metaphor, almost exclusively discusses metaphors of the type 'A is a B', e.g. 'society is a sea', 'marriage is a zero-sum game', 'man is a wolf', etc.[30] Black defines metaphor as an "expression in which some words are used metaphorically while the remainder are used non-metaphorically", identifying particular words as the metaphorical 'focus', and the rest of the sentence as a non-metaphorical 'frame'.[31]

In the following two biblical examples, Black would consider the highlighted words to be the 'focus' of the metaphor: 'He will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four wings of the earth' (Isa 11.12); 'But I am a worm' (Ps 22.6[7]). In such cases, Black's terminology may seem at first sight to provide an appealing and helpful distinction. However, dissecting metaphors in this way is not only far too simplistic, but can actually be misleading.[32] There are many other metaphorical expressions in which it is impossible to identify a particular word(s) as 'metaphorical', e.g. 'That night—let darkness seize it!' (Job 3.6); 'For my iniquities have gone over my head' (Ps 38.4); 'Lead me to the rock that is higher than me' (Ps 61.2[3]); 'A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse' (Isa 11.1). The distinction between 'metaphorical' and 'non-metaphorical' language, or between 'focus' and 'frame' simply does not work here and would be of no value in aiding the interpretation of these verses.

Related to this distinction is the notion of 'tension' or 'incongruence' as a criterion for identifying a metaphor. Semantic and pragmatic approaches to metaphor both regard metaphor as 'deviant' in either linguistic form or language use. They assert that metaphor interpretation involves the process of calculating and then rejecting a literal meaning in favour of a figurative one.[33] A semantic anomaly occurs when the 'surface' meaning of a sentence does not make sense (e.g. the earth is not a living creature with wings).

A pragmatic anomaly occurs when a 'literal' meaning does make sense but is ruled out by the context of utterance (e.g. 'I am a worm' is spoken by

---

[29] Levin 1993: 117.

[30] Black 1993: 27–28.

[31] Black 1962: 27 (my italics); cf. Nielsen 1989: 48–50; Macky 1990: 5; Moughtin-Mumby 2008, etc.

[32] Cf. Soskice 1985: 38–43; Stern 2000: 21–2.

[33] E.g. Ricoeur 2003: 175–185; Aaron 2001: 124; Searle 1993: 83.

a human being). John Searle's pragmatic theory reframes the description of how metaphor works by focussing on the question of how 'literal sentence meaning' and 'speaker's utterance meaning' relate to each other.[34] It rests on the assumption that the metaphor's literal utterance is 'defective' and that this causes the hearer to go "through literal sentence meaning to arrive at utterance meaning".[35]

However, as we have seen in the above discussions on metaphor and models, 'metaphoricity' does not just depend upon the figurativeness of individual words in the expression but on the combination of words that create or rely upon conceptual models.[36] There is even empirical evidence to support the fact that "literal meanings do not have unconditional priority", that is, metaphor comprehension does not rely on processing and rejecting literal meanings.[37] The isolation of particular words as 'metaphorical' or 'incongruous' rests on the assumption that there is a strict dichotomy between what is said 'literally' and what is said 'metaphorically', and can lead to some narrow and distorted views of metaphor. Increasingly, the traditional dichotomy between what is said 'literally' and what is said 'metaphorically' is being broken down and re-constructed in terms of a sliding scale, or 'gradient model'.[38] Leezenberg writes,

> despite the folk-theoretic belief in a clear difference between the literal and the metaphorical, in the practice of everyday communication, there is a continuum rather than a cleavage between them.[39]

In terms of delineating a metaphor for the purposes of exegesis, 'metaphor' cannot therefore be confined to a single word figure (although it may include one), rather, it is the whole expression that constitutes the metaphor. Benjamin Harshav, in response to Black's labels of 'focus' and 'frame', argues that metaphor cannot be limited to 'the boundaries of a *sentence*' or indeed to any linguistic unit, since it has meaning for the reader within the context of the whole 'world' of the text.[40]

When interpreting biblical texts—and particularly poetic texts, packed full of all kinds of verbal art, word-play, parallelism, simile, hyperbole, assonance, alliteration, etc.—metaphors should be recognized as a flex-

---

34 Searle 1993: 84.
35 Searle 1993: 110.
36 Cf. Tendahl 2009: 6.
37 Glucksberg 2008: 68.
38 E.g. Aaron 2001: 29, 112; Glucksberg and Keysar 1993: 401–424.
39 Leezenberg 2001: 294.
40 Harshav 2007: 33–4 (original italics); cf. Kittay 1987: 55.

ible and integral part of the whole text: "In short, we must observe metaphors in literature not as static, discrete units, but as context-sensitive, dynamic patterns, changing in the text continuum".[41]

Navigating through Theories and Approaches to Metaphor

Substitution Theory

One theory that emerged from the consideration of metaphor as a single-word phenomenon is the 'substitution' theory, so-called because it defines a metaphor as the substitution of one word for another/others on the basis of a resemblance between them.[42] For example, in Ps 18.3, the word 'rock' in 'My God is my rock', would be treated by substitutionary approaches as a 'code-word' for strength, security, protection, refuge, etc. Since the word 'rock' has been chosen on the basis of a resemblance to a characteristic of God, once that resemblance has been recognised, the metaphor 'rock' can be translated into 'literal' language. This translation can be represented on a basic level as 'A = B and B *really means* X'.

The cognitive value of the metaphor according to a substitutionary approach therefore lies in a metaphor's 'translatability' into literal language.[43] Metaphor is thus treated as 'deviant' language which has replaced 'normal' language. That is, 'rock' is standing in place of a literal description and is merely decorative. It can be fully 'translated' into literal language without a loss of meaning, i.e. there is no 'surplus meaning'.

Despite its obvious flaws, the legacy of the substitutionary approach to metaphor lives on (to a large extent unconsciously) in numerous translations and discussions of biblical metaphors. The metaphor-as-noun approach is encouraged by the number of 'iconic' metaphors (particularly in the Psalms)—metaphors that make use of a single word (such as 'rock', 'shield', or 'light') and its associations. These are often referred to as 'symbols', 'images' or 'icons', since they cause a mental representation (e.g. of a rock, shield or light). Within a metaphorical word-picture, therefore, there may be particular words which bring a powerful set of symbolic

---

[41] Harshav 2007: 34.

[42] Substitutionary approaches to metaphor are often associated with Aristotle's idea of transference. While there is a degree of overlap, particularly in the idea of metaphor as semantic deviance, it should be noted that Aristotle's descriptions of metaphor in many ways go beyond that of substitutionary theories (Soskice 1989: 3–10).

[43] Cf. Soskice 1985: 25.

associations with them. However, if that symbol is then referred to as 'the metaphor', assumptions based on a substitutionary frame-work can creep in, leading to faulty interpretations. Regarding metaphor as a word or set of replacement words completely ignores the fact that it is a word-picture. It ignores the visual aspect of the metaphor and the associations that a mental picture can bring and it denies the verbal inter-connections within a text which contribute to a metaphor's interpretation.

For example, in some translations of נרי 'my lamp' in Ps 18.29, there is an unacknowledged equivalence of 'lamp' and 'life' that treats 'lamp' as a kind of code. Brettler, for example, interprets נר as 'life-force',[44] arguing that it is synonymous with רוח 'spirit'. Keel also identifies 'lamp' with 'life' but gives a more general rendering of this in Ps 18.29: "you grant me a happy life". The verb תאיר is therefore interpreted in relation to 'light = life', rather than understood as a whole expression in a wider context. The exegesis of v. 29 in Chapter 6 will demonstrate that the semantic associations here are of strength, trust, protection and victory, rather than a general reference to the king's 'life'.

Metaphor as a Rhetorical Device

In rhetorical or ornamental analyses of metaphor, metaphor is denied any cognitive content and has a purely decorative function, which can be regarded negatively or positively. Mordechai Cohen draws attention to the negative ornamental view of metaphor that was prevalent in the medieval Jewish exegetical tradition in al-Andalus (Muslim Spain). He writes: "Despite its poetic sophistication, the Andalusian *peshaṭ* tradition treated metaphor as an exegetical obstacle, an elegant veneer that disguises Scripture's essential meaning".[45]

Macky, who classifies examples of biblical metaphors into three categories (ornamental, substitutionary and interactive metaphors), takes a more positive approach to this 'elegant veneer', describing metaphor's ability to impact or persuade the listener. He writes:

> The major purpose of such ornamental metaphors seems to be aesthetic, to catch the reader's attention, provide a memorable image, and so make the passage have more long-term impact than it would had the literal form been used. Thus, the literal form is not a complete substitute, for it does not do for readers what the metaphor can. However, the literal form can

[44] Brettler 1989: 45.
[45] Cohen 2008: 5.

> express almost all the presentative content, and do it more simply and understandably.[46]

There are two major problems with this view. Firstly, it is not clear how the 'presentative content' would be distilled from the metaphor. The impact of metaphor often resides not only in its 'memorable image' but in its networks of associations that are triggered by the particular words that create the image. Secondly, if one takes a closer look at the literary co-text and context of each of his examples, none of them can be reduced to a non-figurative substitute. For example, he gives a 'literal' paraphrase of Ps 18.5–6: 'the ropes of death have encompassed me . . . and the snares of death sprang up at me', as "I almost died".[47] When these word-pictures of the psalmist's distress are seen within their literary context, the inadequacy of the paraphrase becomes apparent.

The paraphrase treats the metaphors as statements of 'B' which both mean 'A', a false assumption commonly made when two metaphors appear in parallel. It also neglects the fact that if the metaphor is read within the context of the psalm as a whole, the interpretation is significantly different. Rather than the metaphor's subject being exclusively about the grave situation that the psalmist was in, the focus and function of the two metaphors are to depict the psalmist's enemies in a way that associates them with death and other forces of chaos, using words that will recur later on in the psalm with particular resonances.

All four metaphors in Ps 18.5–6 create slightly different yet complementary word-pictures, in which each word has been chosen carefully for its specific associations and to yield a particular effect within the context of the whole psalm. 'Painting' with different words creates different linguistic and conceptual associations, even when the lines are in parallel. It is not a simple 'exchange' of words for the sake of being more decorative or memorable. If the metaphor is rendered by a literal paraphrase, it is not just the emotional impact that is lost, the cognitive content also disappears, as do some of the subtle connections within the psalm. If paraphrased, the exegete would not only obscure the poet's skill but would also miss the full meaning of this verse.

---

[46] Macky 1990: 65.

[47] Macky 1990: 65, cf. Doyle 2000: 105, who uncritically accepts a number of Macky's distinctions.

Interaction Theories

In contrast to the theories outlined above, interaction theories of metaphor recognise that metaphors create new meanings, and do so in a way which cannot be reduced to non-figurative language without significant loss of meaning or impact. I. A. Richards's description of metaphor, upon which several interaction theories depend, states that the meaning of a metaphor is the result of an interaction between "two thoughts of different things active together".[48] He notes that in each metaphor there is a 'tenor' (the underlying subject of the metaphor) and a 'vehicle' (word/s presenting the subject) and possibly other 'subsidiary vehicles' which modify the primary vehicle. Thus in Ps 18.3, 'My God is my cave in whom I seek refuge', Richards would label what the poet is trying to express about God and his relationship to God as the tenor, 'cave' as the vehicle, and 'in whom I seek refuge' as a sub-vehicle.

Max Black's 'interaction theory' instead uses the language of two 'subjects', primary and secondary, which correspond to his identification of 'focus' and 'frame' mentioned earlier. This has led to criticisms that he not only fails to account for more complex metaphors, but also seems to suggest that metaphor is drained of all but a mere mediatory role, a tool for accessing similarities—not something that Black actually endorses.[49] Observing points of comparison does not entail adopting a comparison view of metaphor. For example, in the process of interpreting biblical metaphors, one often looks at potential point-for-point resemblances arising from the word-picture's underlying analogy (e.g. God provides refuge and is strong and unshakeable, etc). Its interpretation necessarily involves an element of comparison because it requires an exploration of the underlying analogy or models.[50] This element of comparison is strongly emphasized in David Kimchi's exegesis of metaphor, 'just as (*kemo*) X . . ., so too (*ken*) Y'.[51]

One significant contribution of the 'interaction' approach to metaphor is the idea that particular words in a metaphor bring with them a whole range of associations, what Black calls "a system of associated commonplaces".[52] Such associations are commonly held views or shared

---

48 Richards 1936: 93.
49 See criticisms of Black in Soskice 1985: 43.
50 Cf. Ortony 1993: 345.
51 Cohen 2008: 280.
52 Black 1962: 40.

assumptions (within a linguistic community or society) about a particular object, action, relationship, etc. For example, in order fully to understand the metaphor discussed earlier, 'the ropes of death have encompassed me' (Ps 18.5a), one would need to know the associations that 'ropes', 'death' and 'encompass' would have carried in ancient Israel.

Eva Kittay modifies Black's view of 'associated commonplaces', reframing the description of the metaphorical process in terms of a juxtaposition of two or more semantic fields.[53] For Kittay, it is important to recognize that both the topic (what the metaphor is about) and the vehicle (the words used to express the topic) belong to semantic fields or content domains.[54] She distinguishes these as follows: "Semantic fields are constituted by content domains that have been articulated by lexical fields", from which the interpretation of a lexeme can be determined according to its context.[55] Semantic fields include a consideration of contrast sets (e.g. human: male; female), and of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations.[56] For example, in the statement 'YHWH is my strength', 'YHWH' is related syntagmatically to the noun 'strength' and paradigmatically to the nouns 'weakness' (in opposition) and 'rock', 'shield', etc. (in parallel).

In a metaphor, when two dissimilar semantic fields are juxtaposed, Kittay argues that the vehicle structures the topic:

> Metaphorical transfers of meaning are transfers from the field of the vehicle to the field of the topic of the relations of affinity and opposition that the vehicle term(s) bears to other terms in its field. More precisely, in metaphor what is transferred are the relations which pertain within one semantic field to a second, distinct content domain.[57]

Kittay's semantic approach provides an extremely useful model for exploring the meaning of word-pictures in BH, as will become clear from the discussion further on.

How, then, are these 'associated commonplaces' or semantic fields 'activated' in a metaphor? Kittay defines metaphor in terms of identifying

---

[53] Kittay 1987: 31–35.

[54] Kittay 1987: 34.

[55] Kittay 1987: 229.

[56] Syntagmatic relationships are those which exist between lexical units that are combined in a sytagm or construction, such as particular subjects and objects of a verb, a noun's construct relations, prepositions used with a verb, etc. Paradigmatic relationships are those that exist between a lexeme and other lexemes which may be used as a substitute for it, such as words that may be used in parallelism or opposition. Cf. Lyons 1995: 240–241.

[57] Kittay 1987: 36.

a semantic incongruity between two or more semantic fields.[58] However, as the earlier discussion of literal and metaphorical language highlighted, the principle of semantic or pragmatic deviance (incongruity) is neither a reliable nor unambiguous criterion to follow. This is the point at which conceptual theories of metaphor move the discussion towards the complex question of the relationship between thought and language: to what extent is metaphor a linguistic or a conceptual phenomenon? How do words and concepts relate to each other when one hears or reads a metaphor?

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The seminal work of Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, sets out a conceptual theory of metaphor (CMT), which focuses on the way in which humans perceive reality.[59] Their fundamental argument is that metaphor is not a particular linguistic phenomenon but it embodies the way we understand and experience the world, i.e. our whole conceptual system is 'metaphorical'.[60] This marks a shift in focus towards an analysis of the underlying cognitive processes and conceptual models that make sense of metaphors, and away from the question of semantic or pragmatic incongruence. In CMT metaphor only 'shows up' secondarily in linguistic expressions. In this study, the term 'model' or 'conceptual model(s)', corresponding to their term 'basic' metaphor, will be used to describe the thought patterns or ways of looking at the world that underlie particular word-pictures, and the word 'metaphor' will be reserved for the particular linguistic expressions that emerge from these models.[61]

One of the major contributions of CMT is that it has highlighted our understanding of the extent to which our language is imbued with metaphorical expressions, and that our conceptual system is determined by "our understanding of and interaction with the world".[62] For example, the expressions 'I'm running out of time', 'her plans are a bit up in the air', etc. are explained as being rooted in common 'basic' or 'general' conceptual metaphors, often unconscious, which are "part of the way members of a

[58] Kittay 1987: 40–95, 140.
[59] Lakoff and Johnson 1980; cf. also Lakoff and Turner 1989.
[60] Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 56.
[61] Cf. critiques of Lakoff in e.g. Aaron 2001: 101–111; Kittay 1987: 185–186; White 1996: 300–301.
[62] Boeve and Feyaerts 1999: 175. For a recent introduction to this subject, see Kövecses 2006.

culture have of conceptualizing their experience".[63] The first expression is based on the basic metaphor 'time is money', which highlights the value our culture gives to time,[64] and the second is an orientational metaphor structured by the spatial concept of 'unknown is up, known is down', which has an experiential basis of being able to study things more clearly when we can reach them.[65] Underlying these basic metaphors are various 'image schemas' (e.g. 'container', 'source-path-goal', 'near-far', etc.) and 'gestalt perceptions' (such as 'conversation', 'argument' and 'war'); these are preconceptual structures that arise from our embodied experience of the world.[66]

The distinction between 'dead' and 'present' (or 'living') metaphors is presented by Lakoff as one of the major mistakes in approaches to metaphor, alongside the false dichotomy (discussed earlier) between literal and metaphorical language. A 'dead' metaphor is identified in lexical semantic theories as a semantic innovation or linguistic creation that we have become accustomed to, one that has been "adopted by a significant part of the linguistic community" and has thus effectively become lexicalised.[67] In fact, for Ricoeur, the 'novelty' and therefore creativity of a metaphor is significantly diminished after its first utterance.[68] Central to the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor is that so-called 'dead' metaphors are, in fact, quite the opposite, precisely because they have become part of the fabric of our thought.[69]

With regard to biblical texts, scholars are faced with the problem of trying to identify what is 'conventional' metaphorical language and what is 'novel'. Removed as we are from the linguistic communities in which the biblical texts were written and read, there is a danger of either 'reading in' associations or theological intentions into a dead metaphor that were not intended by the author, or failing to see an association with a word that was intended by the author, by mistaking it for a dead metaphor. There is an example of this in the analysis of . . . אלי מגני in Ps 18.3. It is also important to be aware of the possibility of 'reawakening' conventional or 'dormant' metaphors.[70] This occurs in Ps 18.8–9, where the conventional

[63] Lakoff and Turner 1989: 9.
[64] Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 7–8.
[65] Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 20.
[66] Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 81.
[67] Ricoeur 2003: 114–115.
[68] Ricoeur 2003: 115.
[69] Lakoff 1987: 143.
[70] Cf. Nielsen 1989: 50–51.

Hebrew metaphor כי חרה לו 'for he was angry' (lit. 'for it burned to him') is given new life by pictures of smoke, fire and coals in v. 9.

The mechanics of metaphor is described in CMT as a process of 'mapping' between a 'target domain' and 'source domain'. The structure of schemas and gestalts operates as a 'source domain' to map onto other experiences, the 'target domains'.[71] For example, 'life is a journey' is identified as a 'basic' metaphor, where 'life' is the target and 'journey' the source domain. The process of metaphor results in a 'set of correspondences' as follows: person = traveller, purposes = destinations, etc.[72] Although this explanation comes from a conceptual starting-point, it is not unlike Kittay's description of a juxtaposition of content domains, and of structuring from a 'donor' to a 'recipient' field.[73] This conceptual overlap will be discussed further on. In terms of biblical exegesis, CMT confirms the importance of investigating the world-views of the biblical writers and of considering the kinds of embodied experiences they used to make sense of other experiences when exploring the meaning of Hebrew word-pictures. Philip King is one of a number of biblical scholars who have demonstrated the benefits of such an approach, in his analysis of image schemas and metaphors for conceptualising distress in the HB.[74]

One of the weaknesses of CMT, especially with regard to poetry, is that it does not adequately account for novel metaphors or individual linguistic expressions within a particular text. It is primarily concerned with recurring patterns in language, and entrenched conceptual relationships between two domains (e.g. argument and war, life and journey, time and money, etc.) rather than on 'interactions' between new or unusual domains, and the potential for linguistic expressions to draw two previously unrelated networks of associations together. Conceptual Blending Theory, a relatively new area of research within Cognitive Linguistics goes some way towards overcoming this problem.[75]

---

[71] King 2012: 33–34.

[72] Lakoff and Turner 1989: 3.

[73] Stienstra 1993: 31.

[74] King 2012. Cf. also Brown 2002; van Wolde 2003a and 2003b; Dille 2004; Kotzé 2004 and 2005; van der Merwe 2006 and 2007; Bergmann 2008; Hayes 2008; van Wolde 2009.

[75] Cf. Freeman 2000.

Conceptual Blending and 'Frames'

The Conceptual Blending Theory of metaphor, proposed by Fauconnier and Turner,[76] focuses on how 'mental spaces' or 'frames' are created by speakers and listeners when using word-pictures.[77] They argue that there are at least four 'spaces' at work: input from the source domain, input from the target domain, 'generic space' (what the two concepts share in common) and the 'blend', which includes implications that do not emerge from either the source or target domain but from the metaphorical process itself. For example, 'This surgeon is a butcher' cannot simply be understood through a simple 'mapping' process from source domain (butchery) to target domain (surgery), such as 'butcher' onto 'surgeon'; 'animal' (cow) onto 'human being'; 'commodity' onto 'patient'; 'cleaver' onto 'scalpel', etc., since the metaphor is trying to express the incompetence of the surgeon—an idea that is "not being projected from source to target".[78]

Although conceptual blending is primarily a descriptive rather than a hermeneutic theory, it can be a valuable aid to the interpretation of biblical metaphors in drawing out different connections between the key features of a metaphor more clearly.[79] What is interesting, particularly for Psalms studies, is the notion of 'mental spaces' or 'frames' and the process whereby 'complex network structures of mental spaces are built up during utterance comprehension'.[80] These frames correspond to mental scenes which are dependent upon domains of knowledge.[81]

---

[76] Fauconnier and Turner 1996; 1998. For a comparison of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory see Grady, Oakley and Coulson 1999.

[77] The use of 'frames' is dependent on 'Frame Semantics', developed by Charles Fillmore (1976).

[78] Grady, Oakley and Coulson 1999: 101–124.

[79] This has been clearly demonstrated by van Hecke 2005: 215–231 and Stovell 2012.

[80] Tendahl 2009: 6.

[81] The initial distinction in Frame Semantics between linguistic frames and mental scenes has largely been dropped in favour of a more integral approach which refers only to frames (see Petruck 1996: 1–13).

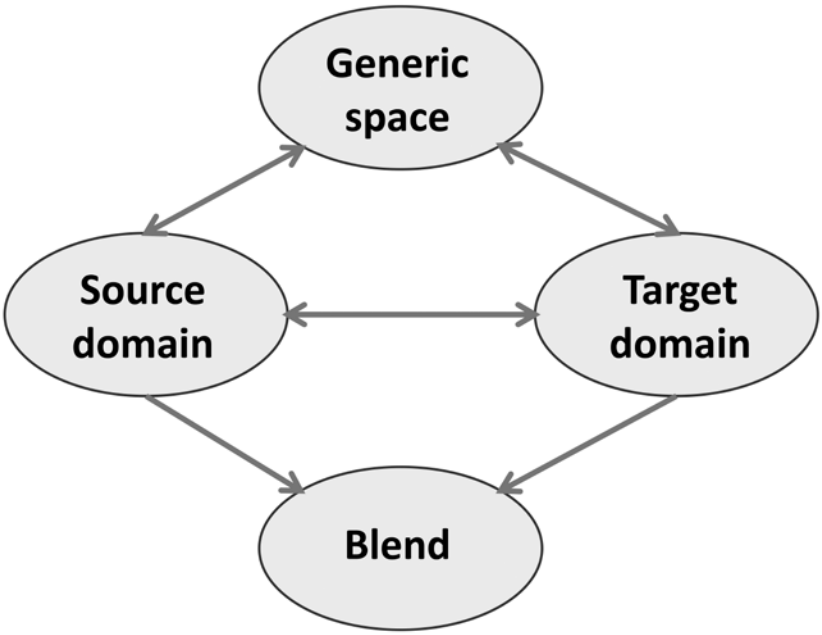

Fig. 1. Conceptual blending model: each 'input space' represents a mental space in the process of metaphor cognition.

'Frames of Reference' and 'Gap-filling'

In the context of interpreting poetic metaphors, Benjamin Harshav uses a similar idea of 'frames of reference', and he provides some helpful descriptions for understanding the process of metaphorical interaction which are illuminative for the Psalms.[82] For Harshav, words create 'frames'. The frame of reference (*fr*) is the "basic unit of semantic integration", rather than a sentence. It is like a picture or a scene, presented as a pattern of language, incorporating any number of words or sentences. These words are not restricted in their 'activity' to that one frame but "can have autonomous relations of their own to their immediate or wider context".[83] In other words, a picture of something (a scene, a person, an object), real or

[82] I am grateful to Stephen Geller, whose paper 'Metaphor and Genre in the Book of Psalms' (presented at the SBL conference in New Orleans, 2009) introduced me to Benjamin Harshav's approach to metaphor and particularly to his concept of "frames of reference", outlined in his essay 'Metaphor and Frames of Reference' (Harshav 2007: 32–75).

[83] Harshav 2007: 43.

fictional, is painted in words for the reader (or simply alluded to) and yet each of these words may also be part of, may relate to, or may be illuminated by, another picture, i.e. the frames do not 'own' or constrain the words within it. This allows the poet to play with words throughout a text and thus join certain scenes (and their associations) together.

In a metaphor, Harshav proposes that there is a "metaphorical transfer" from one *fr* to another. He illustrates this with the following lines from T. S. Eliot's poem 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock':

> Let us go then, you and I,
> When the evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherised upon a table[84]

The reader is introduced to the basic frame of reference (fr_1)—a man inviting someone to walk along a city's streets in the evening—and is then 'encouraged to construct a hypothetical scene (fr_2) of a patient in a hospital waiting for an operation'.[85] Yet the word 'hospital' does not appear—it is suggested by the three words 'patient', 'etherised' and 'table'. The reader thus 'transfers' this hospital scene to fr_1—walking along city streets in the evening. In this process of metaphorical transference, any associations with hospital are available to the reader, that is, the metaphor not only activates associations of particular words, but also encourages a process of 'gap-filling'.[86]

This process of 'gap-filling' is a vivid way of describing the process of 'interaction' between words and pictures that occurs in a metaphor. It also corresponds to the model described by Conceptual Blending Theory, whereby input from the source and target domains merges in the 'generic space' and creates new insights in the 'blending space'. The secondary *fr*, as a word-picture, is able to set "the reader's imagination in a new situation" and the reader is forced to accommodate the two frames of reference. Semantic integration thus involves the reader 'filling in' some of the details.[87] The reader's role in filling in the gaps is precisely what makes metaphor so malleable and so intriguing, and explains how a metaphor can have several different meanings. It also highlights the point of interaction between structural and cognitive semantics. Harshav describes metaphor as using 'world-language', that is, "fragments of world-experience to

---

[84] Note that this metaphor includes and collaborates with a simile.
[85] Harshav 2007: 44.
[86] Harshav 2007: 45.
[87] Harshav 2007: 46.

convey other experiences", similar to Levinson's description of "connotational penumbra".[88] Since 'world-experience' is used to construct metaphors, 'world-experience' is also necessary to interpret them.

The same metaphor can therefore 'speak' to people at different times and in different cultural contexts, since people bring different world-experiences to the text. It also explains in part why approaches to Psalms exegesis are so diverse. The interpretation of metaphors in the Psalms involves a consideration of multiple possible contexts, and therefore also contents, of 'gap-filling'. The mental 'scenes' that are created by the word-pictures (the 'frames') can be filled in with different lexical and conceptual information at different stages in Israel's history, although it is often impossible to accurately chart diachronic semantic and/or theological development.

Complementary Theories of Meaning

At the end of this exploration of various theories and approaches to metaphor, it remains to translate the theories into concrete exegetical practice, i.e. what does the application of lexical semantic, pragmatic and conceptual approaches to biblical Hebrew metaphors look like?

The traditional approach to lexical semantics has maintained a clear distinction between lexical meaning and encyclopaedic (or extra-linguistic) knowledge, that is, knowledge shared within a speech community about a particular object or experience. However, complementary theories are becoming increasingly common in linguistic studies of BH, as an increasing number of scholars are recognising that such a dichotomy is problematic.[89]

Van Steenbergen, for example, proposes a broad theoretical approach to Componential Analysis (CA) in Biblical Hebrew lexicology. Although CA is firmly rooted in structuralist linguistics, van Steenbergen includes insights from cognitive linguistics and highlights its cognitive anthropological background.[90] Stephen Shead's exploration of lexical semantics in BH is similarly broad: he proposes a new model for lexical semantic analysis that is particularly influenced by W. Croft's Radical Construction

---

[88] Harshav 2007: 46; cf. Levinson 1983: 150.
[89] E.g. Langacker 2003: 188 (cit. in Shead 2011: 39); Zanella 2010: 443–448.
[90] Van Steenbergen 2002.

Grammar and C. J. Fillmore's Frame Semantics.[91] Following a summary of the debate over whether or not the 'true meaning' of a term resides in the lexicon, Shead concludes:

> It is simply inconceivable that our general world knowledge and bodily experience could be excluded from the lexical (or "linguistic") meaning of a word . . . any contemporary approach to BH lexicology must find a way of incorporating encyclopaedic knowledge into lexical description.[92]

The same is true for word-pictures: encyclopaedic knowledge must be considered when exploring a metaphor's meaning. This collaboration of words and concepts in metaphor was anticipated by Ricoeur, who describes the point at which semantics reaches its limit in trying to grasp the process of speaking and comprehending a metaphor:

> The secret of epiphora[93] then appears truly to reside in the iconic nature of intuitive passage. Metaphorical meaning as such feeds on the density of imagery released by the poem. If this is how things really stand, then 'seeing as' designates the non-verbal mediation of the metaphorical statement. With this acknowledgement, semantics find its true frontier; and, in so doing, it accomplishes its task. If semantics meets its limit here, a phenomenology of imagination . . . could perhaps take over from psycholinguistics and extend its functioning to a realm where the verbal is vassal to the non-verbal.[94]

However, the application of pragmatics or cognitive linguistics to an ancient language with a fixed and limited corpus may seem like an impossible and fruitless task. How can biblical scholars possibly access ancient Israelite 'encyclopaedic knowledge' or 'world-experience'? Shead summarises the objection often raised to his suggestion that cognitive approaches are relevant to BH semantics: "given that we have no access to the minds of the speakers from antiquity, surely there is no place in BH semantic studies for cognitive linguistics, dynamic construal, conceptual frames and cognitive metaphors".[95] In response, Shead argues that since meaning cannot be detached from conceptualisation, to dismiss the cognitive perspective is equally problematic. He proposes a "cyclic, inductive approach" which examines the meaning of lexemes against the background of the

---

[91] Shead 2011.
[92] Shead 2011: 42–43.
[93] 'Epiphora' is a term used by Aristotle to describe the metaphorical process (see Ricoeur 2003: 17–19).
[94] Ricoeur 2003: 254 (my italics).
[95] Shead 2011: 182.

history of interpretation, comparative philology and cognitive research.[96] Shead endorses James Loader's recommendation of interdisciplinary collaboration for biblical exegesis that integrates a variety of disciplines (e.g. ancient Near Eastern studies, Semitics, archaeology, history of religions, history of ancient Israel, etc.) in the attempt to glean information about language use and its cultural and historical background.[97]

Such an 'interdisciplinary' approach is exemplified by Benjamin Foreman, in his study of animal metaphors in Jeremiah.[98] For each metaphor, Foreman gives an explanation for the identification of a metaphor, offers text-critical observations, and finally, comments on the metaphor's meaning in terms of its language and imagery. Oddly, Foreman's defence of Kittay's Semantic Field Theory of Metaphor as his methodological starting-point is that he is not interested in conceptual metaphors: "we are dealing here with metaphor as a phenomenon of *language* rather than of thought. Our focus, therefore, will be on the text itself".[99] However, not only does Kittay herself express the close relationship between semantic and conceptual structures,[100] but Foreman's actual exegesis of the metaphors in Jeremiah includes material far beyond 'the text itself'. This demonstrates the significant overlap in practice between Kittay's notion of 'content domains' and CMT/CBT's description of source/target domains and 'frames' or 'spaces'.

Foreman's discussion of each metaphor includes a consideration of lexical semantic information, a comparison of similar imagery in other biblical texts, ancient Near Eastern iconographical parallels to the imagery, what is communicated by the metaphor and how it contributes to an understanding of theological themes in Jeremiah. Some of the questions he poses, such as "What effect would it [the metaphor] have had on those who first heard it?" and "Are certain animal images used only of Israel and not of other nations or entities?" cannot but involve considerations of a conceptual nature. The point here is to break down an unnecessary bar-

---

96 Shead 2011: 183.

97 Shead 2011: 183–184. Moughtin-Mumby's criticism of the "act of turning to history" as an "etymological approach to metaphor" (2008: 9ff.) is too strong in my view. She compares the reliance of traditional scholarship on historical background (for a metaphor's meaning) to the misguided quest for a word's etymology as a guide to its proper meaning. While it is certainly true that there are problems and limitations when using historical information, it would be unwise to throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water.

98 Foreman 2011.

99 Foreman 2011: 20–21 (original italics).

100 Steinhart and Kittay 1994: 41.

rier between the semantic field approach to metaphor and the conceptual metaphor approach in biblical exegesis, since in practice it is primarily via a reconstruction of BH semantic fields that we can hope to access an ancient Israelite 'content domain'.

As Shead indicates, analysing BH texts involves a cyclical process. 'World knowledge' gleaned from comparative literature and iconography (etc.) can indeed inform our understanding of a semantic field and of the meaning of particular lexemes, but equally, a detailed linguistic analysis of particular lexemes and their related semantic fields can shed considerable light on how particular objects or experiences were conceptualised. For example, Francesco Zanella highlights the potential contributions that a Componential Analysis of Hebrew terms for 'gift' can make towards a cultural understanding of 'gift' in ancient Israel: "in the case of ancient cultures, the semantic study of a language can constitute one of the most direct ways to form a concrete picture of their ways of thinking".[101]

Lexical semantic theories are therefore employed in this study to the extent that the process of exegesis begins with an analysis of the meaning of individual words in a metaphor, by looking at their word-fields (which lead to an understanding of associative networks of meanings) and at the interactions and relationships between words in different contexts. The interpretation of metaphors in Psalm 18 will be understood within the context of a 'close reading' of the text, in which "all elements in a text, as well as the order of all elements, are *functional* to its meaning".[102] Close lexical analysis (a study of the immediate literary co-text of each lexeme in the text),[103] includes an investigation of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships as well as word-fields and associative networks. In addition to lexical 'fields', there will also be an examination of image 'fields' in relation to particular metaphors. By this is meant a set of word-pictures which are related in some way, through either a conceptual or linguistic resemblance, or by collocation or opposition. In the same way that lexical fields can help to define particular lexemes in relationship to one another, the construction of image-fields will shed light on the meaning of particular word-pictures.

---

[101] Zanella 2010: 446.

[102] Harshav 2007: 47 (original italics).

[103] In Saussurian lexical semantics, a word assumes its meaning both from its place within the system or structure of a language (*langue*) and from its particular use in a specific context or speech act (*parole*).

Pragmatic theories of metaphor, mentioned only briefly in the previous section, focus rather on language *use*, that is, on what the speaker means or intends to say.[104] Although the pragmatic approach to defining or identifying a metaphor has been rejected in the discussions above, an essential and complementary aspect to semantic theories is the pragmatic focus on the importance of what words can do (i.e. their function), the context of linguistic expressions and the impact of these on a metaphor's meaning, e.g. in a context of praise, exhortation, denigration of enemies, etc. Nielsen draws attention to the two 'faces' of metaphor. On one side it fulfils an 'informative function', that is, it can say something about the nature of God, the world and human experience. On the other, it has a 'performative function'—it is able to express praise, thanksgiving, petition, or lament, and can convey a particular message to the reader/listener in terms of persuading, encouraging or warning.[105] These will be addressed in the course of exegesis and conclusions will be drawn about the potential purposes of particular word-pictures in the psalm in Chapter 9.

Finally, input from cognitive linguistic theories is evident in this study from the variety of sources that are used to cross some of the conceptual distance between the 21st century Western world and ancient Israel. Relevant literary, geographical, archaeological and iconographical information is included wherever possible, since it is the writers' conceptual framework, shaped by their community's historical and cultural experiences, which is the source of their linguistic expressions. For example, the observation that Israel has high rocky places which provide great military look-out posts and hide-outs, deeply enriches our understanding of the psalmist's language of God as 'my rock in whom I seek refuge' (Ps 18.3) and enables the reader to engage more fully with the writer's imagination.[106] Similarly, the study of iconographical representations of battle scenes alongside ancient Near Eastern literary depictions of battle can enhance the reader's understanding of biblical descriptions of divine assistance in battle.

These three approaches will be used collaboratively in the exegesis to explore the content, function and interplay of individual metaphors in Psalm 18, and will bring to light any ambiguities that leave the potential for different 'gap-filling'. The diagram below shows an adaptation of

---

[104] See Stern 2000 (ch. 2) and Levinson 1983: 147–162.
[105] Nielsen 1989: 56–60.
[106] Cf. Dewald 2007.

the conceptual blending model to illustrate the process that has been employed in this thesis for interpreting the metaphors in Psalm 18. The arrows show the direction of input in aiding understanding of each of the mental 'spaces'.

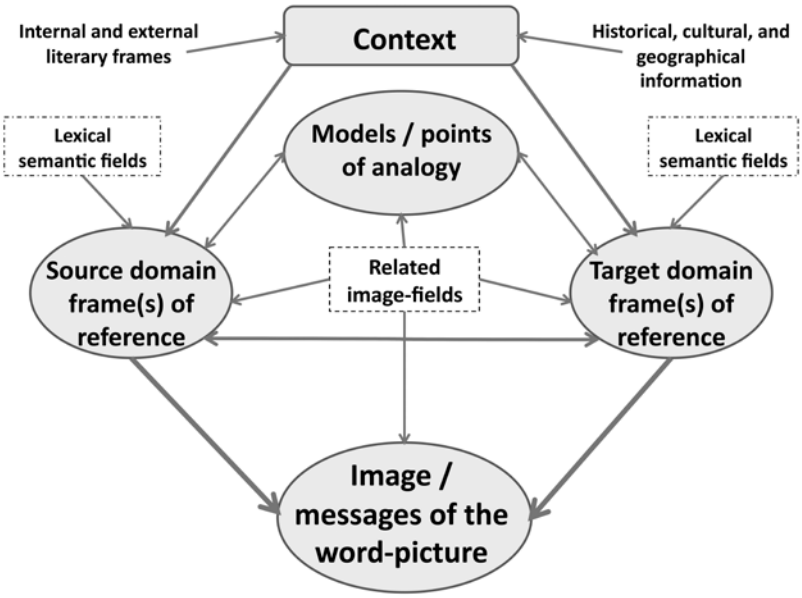

Fig. 2. Working model of interpretation for metaphors in the Psalms.

CHAPTER THREE

SETTING PSALM 18 IN CONTEXT

Before proceeding to an in-depth analysis of the psalm's metaphors, we need to establish the range of different contexts in which the psalm can be read and understood. This chapter will provide an overview of some well-worn questions of the psalm's authorship, date, form, unity, *Sitz im Leben* and relationship to the cult, as well as bringing to light the issue of the psalm's *Sitze im Buch*—its dual editorial 'framing', in terms of how that might impact the interpretation of particular metaphors.

The process of interpreting the meaning of the Psalms can to some extent be compared to that of fictional narratives outlined by Harshav. In an essay entitled 'Fictionality and Fields of Reference', Harshav describes a reciprocal three-tier structure of meaning in fictional narratives, each level of which has to be 'constructed' by the reader:

> Regulating Principles → Sense (of words and syntax) ← Frames of reference

In everyday conversation a speaker's utterance (the sense of the words) is understood in the light of certain Regulating Principles and particular Frames of Reference. In conversation the 'Regulating Principles' are provided by the speaker (e.g. the speaker's tone of voice, body-language, facial expressions, etc.) and the 'Frames of Reference' by reality (namely, the situation to which it applies). In a text, however, both 'Regulating Principles' and 'Frames of Reference' have to be interpreted or 'reconstructed' from the text alone. This leaves open the possibility for multiple interpretations.[1]

The vast majority of biblical psalms have few if any references which can ground them historically and they are often characterized by vague and universal language that leaves the psalm open to a variety of interpretations about its author and the situation in or for which it was composed. Ricoeur refers to a tension in the psalms between what is concrete and specific about a particular situation and what is vague and indeterminate. Commenting on individual psalms of lament, he argues:

> Poetic language's *tour de force* is that it preserves enough concrete indications to keep a lament within the horizon of an individual experience and,

[1] Harshav 2007: 11–12.

> *thanks to a calculated indetermination*, to raise the expression of suffering to the rank of a paradigm.[2]

This general tension between the 'concrete' and the 'paradigmatic' is not limited to psalms of lament but is true of a number of other psalms. In most individual psalms, for example, while the language tells the individual's story, it is expressed in such general terms that it is left open for another to fill the place of the 'I'. Since the creation of a metaphor involves the use of 'world-language', the interpretation of the metaphor draws the reader into supplying his or her own world-language to 'fill in the gaps'. The use of general, non-specific language allows an 'openness' that makes the psalm adaptable to different contexts of use and causes a stumbling-block for the exegete. As a number of different interpretational 'frames' are possible, it is often very difficult to judge which one is the 'best fit'. This difficulty should be named and embraced in Psalms studies. Metaphor thrives on ambiguity and openness and thus facilitates the indeterminacy and generalization that enables the Psalms to function as both liturgical and literary texts.

In terms of identifying 'Regulating Principles' that affect the sense of the words in Psalm 18, there are an unusual number of factors to take into account. One must consider the psalm's form and genre (i.e. whether it is an individual or corporate thanksgiving, an individual or corporate lament, a royal psalm, etc.), and the potential occasion of the psalm's composition (what Harshav calls the "circumstances of utterance"), as well as the location of the psalm within the books of Samuel and its position within the Psalter. These factors constitute what Harshav calls the "authority behind the text" and contribute to an understanding of what could be called the psalmist's or redactor's "stance toward an audience", e.g. to persuade/encourage, or whether certain themes or images are part of a political ideology, or sapiential or pedagogical agenda.[3]

This issue is obviously complicated in the Psalms by questions of redactional layers: the original text—let alone the purpose of the psalm—may be impossible to establish with any certainty. However, Harshav's reflections remind us to take notice of the different positions from which the psalm may be presented, e.g. what would it mean if we assume that David is the psalmist, or how may it have been read by Israel collectively, or how may it have been intended to be read/sung within the frame of its neighbouring psalms?

---

[2] Ricoeur and LaCocque 1998: 215 (my emphasis).
[3] Harshav 2007: 10.

Harshav names the reality projected by, and described within, a text as its 'Internal *Field* of Reference' (IFR),[4] constituted by the totality of its 'frames' or 'scenes'. In some texts, there is also an 'External Field of Reference' (ExFR), a reality that exists *outside* of the text, to which references within an IFR may be made.[5] In Psalm 18, therefore, the hermeneutical challenge is to establish what the 'Internal Field of Reference' might be, that is, what the psalm is describing (an event, situation, relationship, emotional state, etc.) and also what the corresponding 'External Field(s) of Reference' might be, i.e. what historical reality or experience this description is referring to.

The diagram below visually represents what is going on dynamically in the process of interpreting the composition. The 'scenes' and 'word-pictures' create Frames of Reference and portray a particular reality in the text, constituting the Internal Field of Reference (IFR), and also relate to a number of External Fields of Reference (ExFRs). The IFR is interpreted according to certain Regulating Principles and can also correspond to one or more ExFRs. The arrows indicate that all of the interactions involve a two-way process of understanding and interpretation. Metaphor interpretation is affected by all of these relationships.

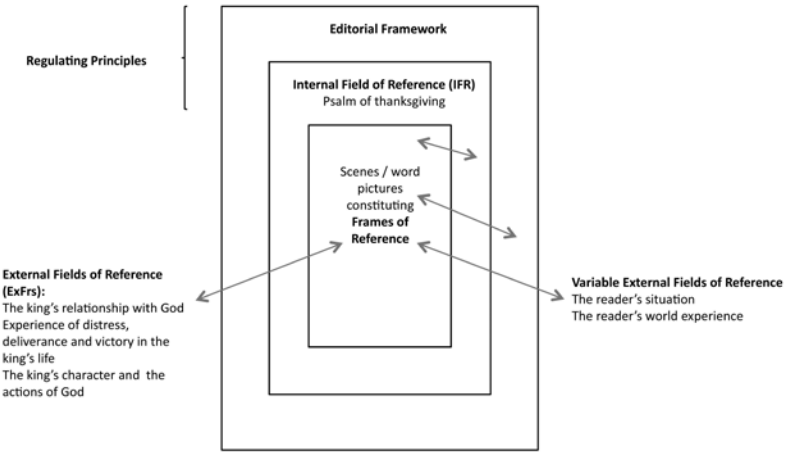

Fig. 3. Frames of Reference for Psalm 18.

[4] There can be more than one IFR projected in a text (Harshav 2007: 7).

[5] Since the Psalms are not fictional literature, but prayers and songs, the reality 'projected' by, or rather 'presented' in, the text *always* has an 'External Field of Reference' (ExFR).

Authorship and Date

The exceptionally long superscription in Ps 18.1 is one such additional frame:

> למנצח לעבד יהוה לדוד אשר דבר ליהוה את־דברי השירה הזאת
> ביום הציל־יהוה אותו מכף כל־איביו ומיד שאול

There is clearly a strong tradition, not confined to the Psalter alone (e.g. 1 Sam 16.18–23; Amos 6.5), associating David with the psalms. The fact that Ps 18 is attributed to David in two separate canonical books has led a number of scholars to date the psalm to the early monarchic period.[6] Various theories surround the authenticity and dating of the psalm titles, but this particular title is unusual, since it is attested in an almost identical form in 2 Samuel 22. Childs observes that the title of Ps 18 is atypical compared with other titles that refer to events in David's life, which are 'stereotyped' and 'constant'.[7] He attributes this unusual formula to the author of 2 Sam 22, who incorporated the poem into his narrative, which was then modified with liturgical instructions by the editors of the Psalms. The details given in the introduction loosely fit the context of 2 Samuel in the sense that the psalm can be seen as an overview of David's lifetime of troubles and victories. In the Psalter's version there is the deliberate addition of the title עבד יהוה to describe David (cf. Pss 36.1; 144.10), in accordance with the Psalter's editorial concerns to present David as the archetypal righteous one.

Although the title refers to a particular day on which David was rescued 'from the hands of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul', the rest of the psalm lacks any historical details such as the identity of the enemies, a battle location, or a reference to Saul. In 2 Samuel both the psalm (ch. 22) and David's 'Last Words' (23.1–7) interrupt the narrative of David's military successes against the Philistines (21.15–22; 23.8–39), forming part of the 'Appendix' to the books of Samuel (chs. 21–24). Slomovic, who has explored the methods employed in assigning some of the Psalm headings in the MT and LXX in the light of "connective midrash",[8] concludes that both MT and LXX psalm titles, like midrash, were often based on "linguis-

---

[6] E.g. Cross and Freedman (1953), Kraus (1993), Weiser (1962), and more recently, Craigie (2004).

[7] Childs 1971: 138–139.

[8] A rabbinic method of connecting the Psalms with particular people and/or historical events (Slomovic 1979).

tic and thematic affinities and similar imagery".[9] Also, like midrash, the authors of the titles were not concerned with complete congruity between psalm and event.[10] It is possible that a similar process was at work in the incorporation of the psalm into the narrative of 2 Samuel. This will be discussed further below under the question of the psalm's *Sitze im Buch*.

A full evaluation of the various arguments for and against an early date is beyond the scope of this study, but questions of dating and the coherence of particular sections within the psalm will be inevitably raised by the exegesis.[11] Arguments for a pre-exilic date include the use of the prefixed conjugation for past, completed actions,[12] reference to the king fighting on foot (v. 34); theophanic language in the context of a battle (cf. Ex 15, Ju 5), a lack of prosaic features characteristic of later Hebrew poetry,[13] and archaic orthography.[14] Those arguing for a post-exilic date point to Aramaisms in the text (e.g. רחם v. 2, גבר v. 26, חרג v. 46, דבר v. 48), expressions only found elsewhere in 'late' texts (e.g. עם־עני v. 28) and doctrinal conceptions considered to be later developments such as the declaration of love for God (v. 2), individual retribution (vv. 26–7) and an expression of pure monotheism (v. 32). From this perspective, archaic literary features (including the theophany in vv. 8–16) are explained as part of an archaizing tendency (cf. e.g. Hab 3.3–15).[15]

However, none of the evidence is conclusive. Arguments for the late dating of biblical texts on the basis of Aramaisms have been considerably weakened by the discovery of Aramaic inscriptions dating as early as the beginning of the first millennium BCE.[16] Similarly the question of dating or recognising developments in theological conceptions is complex.[17]

---

[9] Slomovic 1979: 364.

[10] The following linguistic links between the psalm and events in David's life recorded elsewhere have been identified: סלע, מצודה, and refuge from Saul (e.g. 1 Sam 22.4; 23.14, 19, 29; 1 Chr 11.16; 23.25–8; 24.2); רוץ v. 30 and v. 38 'I pursued my enemies and overtook them', cf. 1 Sam 30.8 (Slomovic 1979: 368).

[11] See Chisholm 1983: 4–8 for detailed arguments.

[12] For a rebuttal of this, see Bloch 2009.

[13] Cf. Berry 1993: 23–24.

[14] Cross and Freedman (1953: 15–16) point to contracted diphthongs in 2 Sam 22 as characteristic of Northern Israel, which therefore antedates the destruction of Samaria in 722/1 B.C.

[15] Attempts to date the psalm to the Maccabean period (e.g. Duhm 1899; Spoer 1907; Buttenwieser 1938) were undermined by the discovery of the Psalms Scroll at Qumran (11QPsa).

[16] See e.g. Wagner (1966) and Hurvitz 2003.

[17] See e.g. Frymer-Kensky (1980), who argues that the origins of the concept of talionic justice can be traced back to the Old Babylonian period.

Unity, Form and Composition

The debate about the psalm's authorship is inevitably bound up with questions of its unity. A common solution to the apparently inconclusive arguments about dating is to discern different redactional stages within the psalm. Consequently there is also very little agreement over the psalm's unity.[18] A number of scholars have proposed that there were originally two separate hymns, on the grounds that the language, forms and themes treated in each section are so different that they cannot possibly fit together.

Psalm 18 is an anomaly in terms of its form and genre. No consensus has yet been reached about where the particular divisions in the psalm might be or to which *Gattung* different sections should be ascribed. Berry argues that form-critical categories are unhelpful here, since "It is neither a song of thanksgiving nor a hymn, nor is it both, since its distinctiveness sets it apart as something unspecified in any or all of those three categorizations".[19] The content and royal references (e.g. battles in vv. 38–43, headship over nations in vv. 44–6, the self reference as YHWH's king and anointed and an allusion to the Davidic covenant in v. 51) strongly suggest that it is a Royal Psalm. Although the absence of 'royal' references in the first half has led some to question the unity of the two halves, this objection only stands if one excludes the theophany from consideration. YHWH's anger at the psalmist's plight (v. 8) and the scale of the theophanic depiction of rescue in vv. 8–16 could surely only be countenanced if the one in trouble was YHWH's anointed?[20]

However, the designation 'Royal Psalm' does not help us to determine its form, as the group of Royal Psalms includes a range of different types of psalm. This should, perhaps, caution us against separating the psalm into different sections according to an ideal 'form'. If it was composed by or for the king in the aftermath of a victory in the pre-exilic period, why should it conform to any particular pattern? However, Gunkel labels the first half of the psalm (vv. 2–32) a song of thanksgiving and the second (vv. 33–51) a hymn of praise, regarding the second half of the psalm as an echo of the situation described in vv. 5–20.[21] The form of speech is not uncommon in thanksgivings, alternating frequently between third-person

---

[18] However, the fact that the whole psalm is also attested in 2 Sam 22 suggests that any divisions should be made with extreme caution.

[19] Berry 1993: 103.

[20] Cf. Chisholm 1983: 37.

[21] Gunkel 1926: 65 (cf. similar divisions in Delitzsch 1984; Seybold 1996).

narrative (typical of a hymn of praise) and second-person address. The function of the psalm from a form-critical perspective is an offering of thanks, although there is no mention of a thank offering. Westermann classifies the whole psalm as a "declarative psalm of praise of the individual", which typically includes a proclamation (v. 2), a description of the time of distress (vv. 5–6), a report of the deliverance (vv. 17–20), a renewed vow of praise (v. 49) and descriptive praise (v. 28, vv. 31–32).[22]

The psalm has some features of an individual thanksgiving, including a description of the psalmist's trouble (vv.5–6), his calling upon God (v. 4, v. 7) and his deliverance (vv.8–20).[23] It also shares some features in common with victory hymns (e.g. Ju 5; 16.23f.; Ps 118, cf. victory song motifs in Ex 15; Deut 32; Ps 68) but lacks a location or names which would help to identify a particular victory.[24] It is thus most suitably described as a royal thanksgiving for victory in battle.

Below is a brief outline of the psalm's structure in thematic units, with asterisks representing features of the psalm that are consistent with two particular categories of psalm:

		Victory Hymns	Individual Thanksgiving
v. 1	Heading		
vv. 2–4	Hymnic introduction / statement of confidence, including statement of need		*
vv. 5–7	Details of distress and call to YHWH	*	*
vv. 8–16	YHWH's response / theophany	*	
vv. 17–20	Circumstances of deliverance		*
vv. 21–25	Reason for deliverance / declaration of righteousness / innocence		
vv. 26–28	YHWH's righteousness		*
vv. 29–30	Praise for YHWH's strength and aid		*

[22] Westermann 1966: 102, cf. Gunkel's description of Individual Thanksgiving Songs (Gunkel 1933: 265–292).

[23] cf. e.g. Pss 30; 34; 116; 118; 138. Formally it lacks a declaration of the intention to thank God at the beginning of the psalm, and there is no mention of a thank-offering.

[24] Westermann (1966: 92) describes vv. 32–48 as "probably a sharply modified portion of a song of victory".

		Victory Hymns	Individual Thanksgiving
v. 31	Praise for YHWH's righteousness		*
vv. 32–37	Statement of incomparability followed by YHWH's provision for the king	*	
vv. 38–43	Description of defeat of king's enemies	*	
vv. 44–46	Elevation of the king and subordination of nations	*	
vv. 47–51	Praise for deliverance and victory	*	*

According to the two categories in the table above that are usually used to describe the psalm, the declaration of righteousness (vv. 21–25) is out of place in both and deserves a brief mention. A declaration of innocence is typically found in psalms of lament (e.g. Pss 7.4–6, 9; 17.3–5; 26.1, 3–8; 44.18–22)—the first three of these are also associated with David by their title. However, unlike in the lament psalms, the declaration in Psalm 18 seems to serve a didactic and paraenetic purpose, to show how YHWH rewards those who are faithful.[25] This is similar to other reflections on YHWH's righteousness with respect to rewarding the righteous that are found in other Individual Thanksgivings (e.g. 32.6–7; 34.8, 16, 18; 116.5–6, etc.) and should perhaps be seen as a natural extension of this (influenced by the declarations of innocence in the lament psalms) rather than a peculiarity (cf. Ps 66.18–19).

K.-P. Adam's revision of traditional 'solutions' to the problem of dating and composition in Psalm 18 is interesting from the perspective of metaphor interpretation, as his arguments partly rest on the view that each unit contains different conceptions of the rescue and uses different imagery to portray it.[26] Form-critically, grammatically and conceptually, Adam thinks that there are good reasons to divide the psalm into different literary compositions: vv. 4–20 form an individual psalm, coupled with vv. 33–41 in the pre-exilic period, shaped into a royal thanksgiving in the post-exilic period with vv. 2–3, 42–50, attributed to David in the 3rd Century (v.1aα, 51) and supplemented by the addition of vv. 21–32, 44a before

[25] Cf. other short assertions of innocence as a basis for deliverance in e.g. Pss 9.5; 41.12ff; 66.18f.

[26] Adam 2001.

the Maccabean period. However, in the exegesis, a careful assessment of how different word-pictures interact within the psalm will show how the conceptions of the rescue are more closely related than they first appear.

The question of the theophany's place within the psalm has been a particularly contentious issue.[27] Firstly, verses 8–16 differ in certain respects from their immediate literary context in terms of style and expression. Secondly, the manifestation of divine power is described in such bold colours that it has been considered incommensurate with the reported danger.

Since there is continuity between v. 7 and v. 17 and a lack of 1st person references in vv. 8–16, one could arguably omit the theophany without loss of meaning. However, there are strong grounds for suggesting that it was woven into the psalm's original composition, even if it was an independent literary unit prior to this. Verses 4–7 (the reason for the theophany) and 17–20 (a commentary on the results of the theophany) provide a narrative 'frame' for the theophany, connected by the theme of water (vv. 5, 17).[28] Furthermore, the pronominal suffix (לו) in v. 8 warns against separating it from v. 7,[29] and the phrase מים רבים in v. 17 is fully consistent with the mythological elements of the theophany which portray YHWH as a storm-god. The apparent inconsistency between v. 10 and v. 17, that YHWH is said to have 'come down' and yet subsequently 'reached down', is resolved by the exegesis of vv. 17–20, which demonstrated that the poet offers two complementary rather than contradictory descriptions of YHWH's help. They serve to bind the first half of the psalm together, drawing out an interpretation of the theophany which accommodates it more smoothly into the psalm. The fact that different images are used to describe the same event should not surprise us, but should prompt us to look more closely at what the different word-pictures are trying to say.

The other common objection is that the theophany is too grand for its context. Baumann, for example, regards its "heldische Leidenschaft" as out of place in the parochial world of the psalmist![30] However, in terms of its consistency within the psalm as a whole, one may well ask the question that if a psalmist can liken his distress to being caught in Sheol, in what way is it any more extreme to describe his rescue in terms of

---

[27] Duhm (1899: 79) calls it "künstlich"; Gunkel (1926: 67) calls it "schwülstig", cf. Seybold 1996: 81.

[28] Berry 1993: 100.

[29] Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 119.

[30] Baumann 1945: 133.

a theophany?[31] If the message behind the theophany is properly understood, one can see the significance of such grandiose descriptions. This study will demonstrate that there are profound theological reasons why such vivid, cosmic language is used, and that this is fully consistent with a royal thanksgiving hymn for victory in battle.

Since there are no substantial arguments against the psalm being written in the pre-exilic period, a monarchic 'field of reference' is taken to be a legitimate interpretative frame in this study. This is confirmed by a closer look at the psalm's analogical word-pictures and their underlying conceptual models in relation to other ancient Near Eastern texts. With regard to vv. 21–31, which certainly stands out from the rest of the psalm in terms of style and vocabulary, I concur with Gunkel that there are strong reasons for setting this section within the broader context of Deuteronomic ideas in the seventh century (see Chapter 9).[32] This does not foreclose the possibility that parts of the psalm were written earlier, but since the composition holds together as a unity in terms of theological and other themes, I will argue that attempts to divide it into different compositions should be very tentative. The primary concern in this study is to highlight the integrity of the psalm's final form in terms of its themes, words and pictures, and to demonstrate how words and pictures in one part of the psalm can alter what is seen in other parts.

Sitz im Leben

The lack of specific identification of the enemies and location of battle allows for two main proposals for the occasion of the psalm's composition: i) to celebrate a particular military victory and then for subsequent victory celebrations, which could explain its insertion into the narrative of 2 Sam 22, and ii) for use at a particular festival. Gunkel classifies the psalm as a celebration of the king's return in victory from battle and comments that Ps 18.33–49 echoes "eine ganze Reihe von solchen Siegesliedern".[33] There are some interesting linguistic and conceptual parallels between Psalm 18 and Egyptian and Assyrian royal hymns and reports of victory, particularly the hymn to Amon by Pharaoh Rameses II following the battle against the Hittites at Kadesh. Mowinckel considers the Egyptian style of the psalm to

[31] Cf. e.g. Pss 9.14; 116.3; Jon 2.3.
[32] Cf. Gunkel 1926: 67.
[33] Gunkel 1933: 145; cf. Eissfeldt 1965: 104.

be a reason for the lack of particular details of the deliverance: "One suspects the composer of Psalm 18 of having studied the poetical art of Egypt, and that he too lays more stress on grandiose description and ebullient enthusiasm than on actual facts".[34] Thematic parallels such as the role of the deity as protector of the king, the king's loyalty and devotion as the basis of protection, divine training and preparation for warfare, the gift of strength, divine intervention in battle (including theophanic divine-warrior imagery), divine incomparability and the deity as the deliverer of the righteous will be discussed in detail at relevant points in the exegesis.[35] Each of these strengthens the case for the identification of Psalm 18 as a royal psalm of thanksgiving for victory in battle.

This identification is also confirmed by its close proximity to Psalms 20 and 21, a royal prayer for victory and a royal thanksgiving for victory, respectively. Mowinckel describes Psalm 20 as "a national psalm of intercession for the king before he goes to war",[36] and Craigie compares it to Jehoshaphat's prayer in 2 Chronicles 20.5–12.[37] If there was some sort of 'congregational intercession' preceding a military battle, surely there could also have been a congregational celebration and thanksgiving for victory, for which Psalm 18 would be a natural choice?[38]

Jeremias's seminal work on theophany adds further weight to the argument that Psalm 18 is a victory thanksgiving, although Jeremias himself does not arrive at the same conclusion. Jeremias sets out to identify the earliest form of theophanic imagery in the HB, according to form-critical considerations, and to determine the *Sitz im Leben* of the form and its origins.[39] He establishes a 'two-member' theophanic statement: the disruption of nature at YHWH's presence (originating in Near Eastern literary motifs) and the coming of YHWH from a particular place (which he attributes to the Sinai tradition). He argues that these theophanic images have their *Sitz im Leben* in victory songs which Israel sang after the Wars of YHWH, identifying Deborah's Song (Ju 5.4f.) as the earliest example and original form of theophany texts.

He then traces a line of development to the *Gattung* in various psalms, prophetic texts and prose narratives, in which he categorizes Ps 18.8–16

---

[34] Mowinckel 2004: I, 72.
[35] A number of these have been identified by Chisholm (1983: 294–297).
[36] Mowinckel 2004: I, 225.
[37] Craigie 2004: 185.
[38] Mowinckel 2004: I, 224.
[39] Jeremias 1965.

as the 'Langform', describing it as the most detailed and developed of all the texts he discusses.[40] Although he suggests that the theophanies in Psalms 18, 77 and 144 could originally have been sung at victory celebrations,[41] his main argument against the originality of the theophany within Ps 18 is that YHWH's coming is not usually described in the rescue of an individual and that theophanic texts do not belong to thanksgivings.[42] His thesis is "a classic case of overextended form-critical method",[43] that overlooks the fact that a variety of theophanic motifs are used in a number of different contexts for a particular theological purpose.[44] If the king is understood as the representative for Israel,[45] Psalm 18 could represent a development from the use of theophanic imagery in a victory song of Israel on the lips of the soldiers, to its use in a victory song of the king in an individual thanksgiving.

Since it is difficult to identify any particular historical occasion for the psalm, some scholars have given the psalm a festal rather than a historical interpretation. There have been several proposals for a cultic *Sitz im Leben*, including the enthronement festival and the covenant renewal festival.[46] Weiser, for example, considers *all* theophany descriptions to be alien to the psalms, unless one understands them as "Reflexe eines im Kult vorgegebenen Geschehens".[47] According to Weiser, the explanation of the theophany in Ps 18 as a "piece of poetic embellishment" fails to understand the role of theophany in the cult. He thinks it has been misunderstood by scholars as an old but essentially meaningless tradition, whereas it is in fact "ein Kernstück des gottesdienstlichen Lebens".[48] There are some highly problematic aspects of this view, so we will look at his arguments in more detail.

---

[40] Jeremias 1965: 33, 51.

[41] Jeremias 1965: 156.

[42] Jeremias 1965: 129.

[43] Mann 1977: 9–10. Rather than constituting a literary form, I concur with Köckert (2001) that the theophanic images in the HB form a 'motif-complex' which is much more flexible than Jeremias suggests.

[44] Gandiya (1997: 59) remarks in her thesis that a discussion of the "theological intentionality" of the theophanic texts has largely been ignored in favour of form-critical and stylistic questions. She argues that YHWH is depicted as a storm-god in Pss 18 and 144 in order to emphasise his role as divine warrior and saviour.

[45] Mowinckel 2004: I, 44.

[46] Kraus (1993: 257) points to the psalm itself for evidence of a temple setting (v. 7) although היכל is used frequently of YHWH's divine abode and seems to refer more naturally to that here, considering the verb ירד in v. 10.

[47] Weiser 1961: 307.

[48] Weiser 1961: 321.

Weiser explains the theophany passage in Ps 18, together with those in Pss 50, 68, 77 and 97, as a deliberate recollection of the Sinai theophany, and he understands theophanic images in terms of a hymnic confession and response to the self-revelation of Yahweh in the cult by the worshipping community. More specifically, he analyses features of the theophany in Ps 18 in terms of cultic symbolism, e.g. the cherubim (Ps 18.11), representing the clouds, symbolic of Yahweh's presence with his people (cf. Ex 19.16, 18; 33.9ff.; 34.5ff; Lev 16.2; Ezek 10.3ff; Isa 4.5), the veiling of God (Ps 18.12), referring to the second main function of the cherubim on the Ark of shielding the Almighty, etc. He argues that Ps 18 is concerned not with thanksgiving for battle victory (since it does not refer to an historical event) but with thanksgiving for the king's salvation in terms of the whole rise of the Davidic kingdom.[49] The theophany therefore serves this purpose, since the appearance and revelation of Yahweh in the cult guarantees the salvation of the people and the king, dependent upon the king's piety (v. 21f).

Weiser claims that one cannot fully understand the theophany passages in the psalms if one ignores the response-nature of the cultic hymn and the theocentric nature of the cult. However, if one ignores the power and function of verbal art, surely one cannot understand the cultic hymn? Verbal art is not just poetic embellishment or a rhetorical device, but a way of describing reality and of engaging and demanding a response from the hearer. Verbal art actually *serves* the nature of the cultic hymn that Weiser is describing. Secondly, if one focuses on the theophany as a self-revelation of Yahweh in the cult, it is easy to miss the meaning and function of the particular word-pictures used in the description. It also means that features of the poetic structure of the psalm as a whole may be overlooked, for example, the similarities between Yahweh's coming and the preparation of the king for battle.

In the case of Ps 18, the theophany is an elaborate description of Yahweh's presence and action, pictured by nature's reaction and Yahweh's anger, and his coming and fighting against the psalmist's enemies. It is a literary tool that is used not only to communicate Yahweh's power, but also to remind the hearer of who Yahweh is—one who deigns to come down and rescue and defend his anointed, one whose presence and anger causes the very foundations of the earth to tremble and who can overcome even the stranglehold of death. It is difficult to see how this affirmation

[49] Weiser 1961: 316.

and praise of Yahweh is *contrary* to the theocentric nature of the cult. The interpretation of the theophany in Ps 18 as a creative literary piece does not preclude its use in the cult or lessen its impact. Rather it draws out the rich symbolism within each verse, which may otherwise be obscured or diminished.

Weiser explains that theophanic images, presented as 'actio dei', occur in so many different forms that we are *prevented* from seeing the actual ritual of theophany.[50] However, this simply sounds like special pleading. The theophanies in the psalms that are presented as *actio dei* are usually described as such because they *are* referring to Yahweh's mighty action (e.g. defeating the psalmist's enemies in Ps 18), not simply to Yahweh's presence (and nature's reaction to it). The collision of myth and history that occurs in Psalm 18's theophany is simply not explicable from cultic practice. The use of storm, weather-god and divine warrior imagery in the theophany is not just a way of talking about encountering the living god in worship, but is a deliberate and powerful re-expression of a particular historical experience of rescue and victory in battle.

Brief mention should also be made of A. R. Johnson, who interprets a number of psalms in the light of ritual cultic drama.[51] He contends that the Israelite autumnal enthronement festival involved a procession from the Gihon Spring to the temple. According to Johnson (in agreement with Mowinckel), the purpose of this festival was to celebrate Yahweh's triumph over chaos, the subjection of the cosmic sea and Yahweh's enthronement over the other gods, to demonstrate Yahweh's power in creation and to summons people to renew their faith and obedience to Yahweh.

Johnson considers Ps 18 to be a thanksgiving for the help that has been requested in Pss 89 and 101 and connects Yahweh's theophany directly to a celebration of the subjugation of the sea.[52] He also suggests the possibility of a baptismal scene as part of the dramatic ritual (relating to Ps 18.5–6, 17). J. H. Eaton takes a similar view of Ps 18 as "a liturgical salvation" that formed part of the annual drama of kingship. He remarks that vv. 5–20 read as "pure and intact myth" rather than having any historical basis.[53] Eaton does, however, add a proviso for this interpretation, namely, that it is plausible "*if* other psalms indicate the existence of such rites".[54]

---

[50] Weiser 1961: 314.
[51] Johnson 1967.
[52] Eaton 1976: 119.
[53] Eaton 1976: 115–6.
[54] Eaton 1976: 116 (my italics).

It seems that the weight of evidence does *not* lead to such a conclusion. Aside from the paucity of clear biblical references to such a drama, postulating the existence of such rites on the basis of 'clues' gathered from a number of otherwise disparate psalms is unnecessary if one understands the role and importance of metaphor in both lament and thanksgiving psalms. Mowinckel writes about the language of descent into Sheol, threat and distress, that

> it should be easy to understand that the authors . . . wanting to rouse the compassion of Yahweh by making the distress appear as great and cruel as possible, would preferentially resort to known metaphors from the myth of the descent into the nether world . . . Therefore when these descriptions occur in laments and thanksgiving psalms, they can never be used to prove the 'cultic descent into the nether world' of the king of Israel.[55]

Johnson's theory of ritual drama fundamentally misunderstands and undermines metaphor and also fails to account for the presence of the psalm in 2 Sam 22. If there were such a ritual humiliation of the king, it seems strange that the psalm would have been included in a historical narrative without a single reference to the festival itself. When one considers the importance of context, it is immediately clear that Pss 89, 101 and 18 are strikingly different in tone, nature and form. There are certainly resonances between them—verbal and conceptual parallels, motifs and themes,[56] but they are not fundamentally connected so that they clearly represent particular stages of a festival liturgy. Again, this is not to say that they were *never* used together in such a way but that arguing for their composition for that purpose seems indefensible.[57] Since there are very few indications of elaborate cultic dramas in the HB, it seems more likely that cultic symbols were used to evoke the realities described by the figurative language in the psalm.[58]

In conclusion, although the psalm may well have been used in cultic celebrations or festivals, there are strong indicators that the psalm was composed originally as a royal victory song of thanksgiving, and was perhaps used to celebrate subsequent military victories.

---

[55] Mowinckel 1962a: I.244.

[56] Pss 18 and 89 share the general situation of need and cry for deliverance as well as more specific resonances, e.g. חסד (89.2–3, 29–30 cf. 18.50–1), incomparability of Yahweh (89.7 cf. 18.32), covenant faithfulness (89.31ff. cf. 18.21ff.), Yahweh's help to crush the enemy (89.24 cf. 18.43). Ps 101 shares the theme of righteousness and vindication, cf. Ps 18.21ff.

[57] See Ward 1961 for more detailed arguments.

[58] Cf. Chisholm 1983: 34.

Sitz im Buch i) *Psalm 18 in Book I of the Psalter*

Psalm 18 has two competing editorial frameworks, since it uniquely has two *Sitze im Buch*: the Psalter and the Books of Samuel. Returning to the diagram of frames we met earlier (see Fig. 3), it deliberately mimics a painting set in a number of different frames. The question of a psalm's *Sitz im Buch* can be compared to how a painting is altered by giving it a different coloured frame—for example, a blue frame will bring out different colours in the painting from a red one. In each of Psalm 18's literary frames, different words and pictures within the 'Internal Field of Reference' will be highlighted by the concerns of those literary frames and their interpretation will be informed by different External Fields of Reference, namely, those of the editors. Within this model, one might also add additional frames to represent any changes made to the text, since a word, verse or section can alter the psalm's frame, shifting the interpretation of the whole.

The wider literary 'frame' for Psalm 18 within Book I is a group of ten psalms, 15–24, which is 'book-ended' by liturgies for entrance into the temple. They are arranged concentrically, with Psalm 19, a Torah/Wisdom hymn of praise, at the centre, surrounded by a cluster of royal psalms:[59]

Ps 15 Liturgy for entrance to the temple
  Ps 16 Song of trust/confidence
    Ps 17 Individual lament: prayer for protection and vindication
      Ps 18 Royal psalm of thanksgiving for victory
        Ps 19 Torah/Wisdom hymn of praise
      Ps 20 Royal prayer for victory
      Ps 21 Royal psalm of thanksgiving for victory
    Ps 22 Individual lament: prayer for deliverance/thanksgiving
  Ps 23 Song of trust/confidence
Ps 24 Liturgy for entrance to the temple

Patrick Miller proposes that the group of Psalms 15–24 serves a particular redactional purpose within the Psalter as a whole, which is to define "proper kingship at the beginning of the Psalter" and to affirm the "rule of YHWH".[60] Along similar lines, Jamie Grant has proposed that the Psalter's editorial concern centres around three pairs of psalms that juxtapose

[59] Cf. Brown 2010: 260.
[60] Miller 1994: 140–141.

a torah or wisdom psalm with a royal psalm (1–2, 18–19 and 118–119).[61] Psalms 18–21, in Grant's view, portray the king as the archetypal righteous one and the keeper of torah.

An alternative canonical approach is presented by Jerome Creach, who highlights the dominant root metaphor of 'refuge' that runs throughout the Psalter. He claims that Book I is centred on the portrayal of the righteous individual who seeks refuge in YHWH.[62] This view is supplemented by William Brown suggestion that 'pathway' forms a second and complementary image to Torah that dominates the shape of the Psalter's landscape.[63] Brown has also explored the 'metaphorical theology' of this group of psalms, focussing on the interactions between the "broader network of metaphors" and in particular on the role of Ps 19 at its centre.[64]

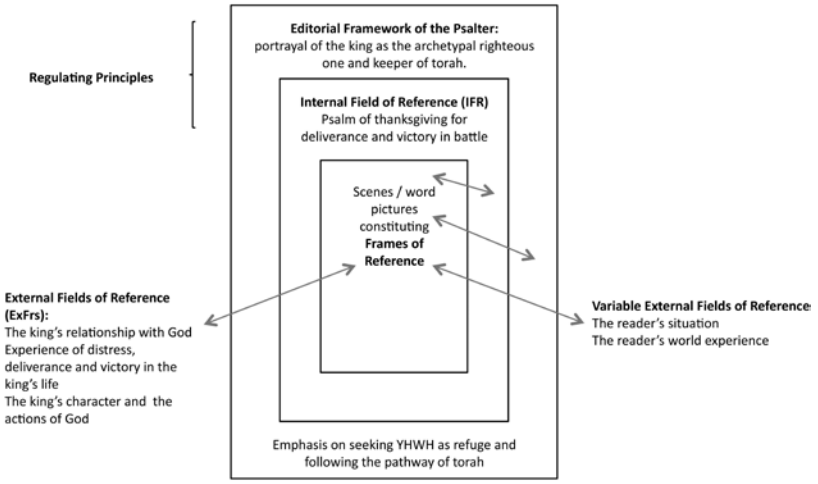

Fig. 4. The diagram represents the potential editorial concerns which can affect the interpretation of particular scenes or word-pictures in Ps 18.

[61] Grant 2004. Grant's thesis is developed from James Mays' study of Torah-Psalms (1987), which highlights the importance of Pss 1, 19 and 119 and their royal 'pairings'. Mays concludes that for the editors of the Psalms "life under the Lord must be understood and recited in the light of the reign of the Lord and that all psalms concerned with kingship of the Lord are to be understood and recited with the torah in mind" (Mays 1987: 10).

[62] Creach 1996: 74–80.

[63] Brown 2002: 31–53.

[64] Brown 2010.

Sitz im Buch ii) The Song of David in the Books of Samuel

In *Psalm and Story* James Watts examines the role of a number of poems set in narrative contexts in the HB, including David's Song in 2 Samuel 22 (= Ps 18).[65] His evaluation of arguments for the editorial insertion of 2 Sam 21–24 and the narrative role of David's Thanksgiving in ch. 22 is clear and persuasive. The appendix to the Books of Samuel distinguishes itself from the rest of the Samuel narratives by its vague temporality (21.1, 15, 18, 19, 20) and lack of chronological sequence. It is arranged chiastically, beginning and ending with the famine and census respectively (21.1–14; 24.1–25), with accounts of Philistine wars and lists of David's men (21.15–22 and 23.8–39) separated at its centre by the two psalms (22.1–23.7). Although ch. 22 is only loosely connected to the narrative plot, Watts identifies some distinctive lexical and thematic links with the 'Last Words of David' which follows it.[66]

Opinions are divided over whether the psalm paints the portrait of an ideal king in order to criticise David,[67] or to characterise him as YHWH's 'favourite'.[68] In support of the latter view, Watts proposes that the purpose of the psalm in ch. 22 is to shift the focus from David to YHWH, from David's actions to YHWH's. He writes "the psalm makes explicit the divine causality behind all of David's successes and focuses attention on YHWH as the primary subject of the Samuel narratives."[69] Watts picks up on the linguistic resonances between the opening descriptions of YHWH in the psalm (e.g. vv. 2–3 צור, סלע and מצודה) and the places used of David's hiding places from Saul (e.g. 1 Sam 22.4–5; 23.14, 19, 25, 28, 29; 24.23). He concludes that the effect of this

---

65 Watts 1992. Part of his concern is to investigate what the inclusion of these 'psalms' might reveal about later attitudes to Israel's psalmody or the history of psalmody and to re-evaluate the evidence for the secondary status of the poems in their narrative contexts (ibid. 12–14).

66 E.g. צור (2 Sam 22.3, 32, 47; 23.3), משיח (22.51; 23.1), בליעל (22.5; 23.6); ישע (22.4, 28, 36, 42, 47; 23.5). In 23.1 David is named as הגבר הקם על, the man who was raised up on high, which forms a thematic connection with 22.34, 49, which describe God establishing him on the heights and raising him up out of trouble. The poems also share the theme of YHWH's eternal covenant with David and his descendants (22.51; 23.5); cf. Sheppard 1980: 149–50; Vesco 1987: 55.

67 See e.g. Carlson 1964: 195–197; Brueggemann 1988: 389.

68 See e.g. Hertzberg 1964: 393; Whedbee 1988: 163.

69 Watts 1992: 104.

> is to transform the literal language of the narratives into metaphors of YHWH's protection of David and to make explicitly clear that it was not the accidents of geography and war but rather God's relationship with David which brought him to the throne of Israel.[70]

Watts argues that the centrality of vv. 21–25 points to the characterization of David as the ideal king, and that it ignores the more negative portrayals of the king in the Samuel narratives by emphasizing the positive aspects of his relationship with YHWH.

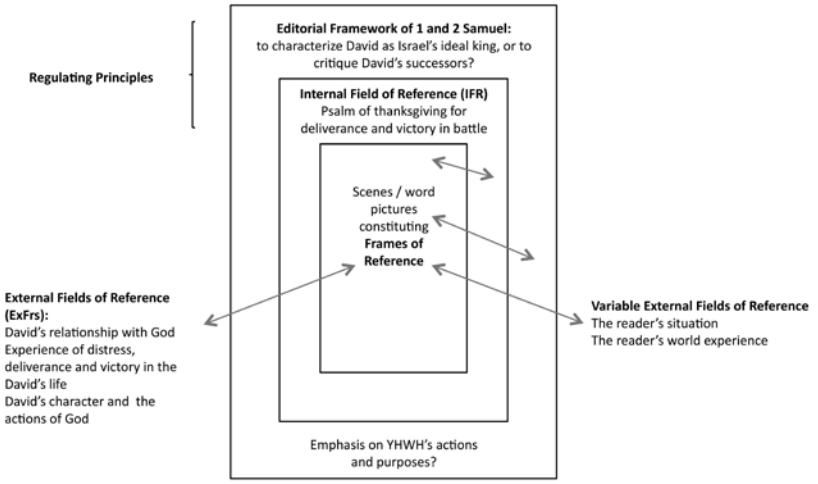

Fig. 5. This diagram represents the potential editorial concerns which may affect the interpretation of particular scenes or word-pictures in 2 Sam 22.

Watts proceeds to point out the numerous verbal and thematic similarities with Hannah's Song in 1 Samuel 2 (see table below) and argues that these two celebratory psalms together envelop the Samuel narratives with the basic theme "YHWH's purposes were accomplished through David".[71]

[70] Watts 1992: 105–6.
[71] Watts 1992: 106.

1 Sam 2	Ps 18 / 2 Sam 22	Verbal and conceptual similarities
1	3	קרן horn/strength
1	3	ישועה salvation/victory
2	3, 32, 47	צור rock
2	32	incomparability formula
4–5, 8	28	reversal/exaltation of poor
9	34, 37	keeping feet safe
10	14	רעם thundering in the heavens
10	40, 49, 51	YHWH gives strength to king / exalts his horn

The impact of these two potential editorial 'frames' of the Psalter and the Books of Samuel on the interpretation of particular words and word-pictures will be considered in Chapter 9. However, the main focus of the exegesis will be on Psalm 18 as a 'frame-less' psalm, that is, vv. 2–51, in order to demonstrate how 'gap-filling' works on one particular level within a psalm, and also to highlight the ambiguity that is inherent in word-pictures within a psalm, that lends itself to a variety of interpretations when given a different literary frame.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSLATION AND EXEGESIS OF PSALM 18.1, 2–7

A Note about Text and Translation

The textual criticism of Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 is complicated and lies beyond the scope of this study. There are numerous variations of different kinds between the two texts: orthographical, morphological, syntactical, word order, lexical, additions and omissions. Although arguments for the priority of each variation abound and have been analysed in detail,[1] attempts to reconstruct the 'original' text or two original texts have proved unsuccessful.[2] Craigie's suggestion that there were "oral alternatives" which predate the texts we now have seems to provide a helpful solution to the textual-critical problems.[3]

While the main focus of this study is on the text of Psalm 18, the *Doppeltext* in 2 Samuel 22 provides the rare opportunity to examine how small lexical variations can affect a word-picture and its meaning. Therefore the variations between the two texts will only be considered if they significantly alter a particular word-picture or if the addition of a word has a wider impact on the rest of the psalm.

The tension for any translator between being faithful to the "linguistic peculiarities" of the original and the desire to present the 'sense' of the original is particularly problematic in the case of metaphor.[4] If one tries to retain the Hebrew word-picture there is the risk of semantic obscurity, but if one tries to present a figurative expression in non-figurative language, the metaphor's rich imagery, power and 'surplus meaning' is lost. Furthermore, particular words may have different semantic associations, for example, לֵב 'heart' has associations in Hebrew with the intellect and the will, whereas in English it is more closely related to matters of emotion and affection.[5] Thus, literally preserving the word-picture in this case

---

[1] Cross and Freedman (1953) have conducted a detailed analysis of orthographic variants; see also Schmuttermayr (1971).

[2] Cf. Chisholm 1983: 108.

[3] Craigie 2004: 172.

[4] Hunter 2008: 58–77.

[5] Hunter 2008: 62.

could be misleading. Hunter observes attempts in some modern editions of the Psalter to substitute a Hebrew metaphor for an English one, thus providing an alternative image which is more accessible, e.g. Ps 6.1 in the Lincoln Psalter reads: "O Lord, tick me off but not in anger, take me to task but not while you are wild".[6]

However, the aim of the translation in the present study is not to find alternative word-pictures but to explain the ones that are used by the psalmist(s). As far as possible, the Hebrew word-pictures are faithfully represented by making visible the pictorial aspects of the poet's metaphors, which will then be explained in the exegesis, where the potential range of associations and meanings of the word-pictures will be explored. As the Psalms are often read aloud, their word-pictures also have associated aural devices like a sound-track, provided by assonance, alliteration and word-play. Where these are lost in translation, they will be mentioned in the exegesis.

Psalm Structure

There are three main parts of the psalm in terms of its overarching narrative: the psalmist's plight and rescue in vv. 2–20, the reasons for his rescue in 21–30, and God's assistance of the psalmist (in battle and in general) in 31–51. In the following chapters I have divided these further into nine sections of exegesis: vv. 2–3, 4–7, 8–16, 17–20, 21–25, 26–30, 31–37, 38–46, 47–51. The reasons for these divisions will become clear in the introductory remarks to each section. We will return to the question of the psalm's thematic structure in chapter 9.

Words and Pictures in Verse 1

The psalm title will be treated here as an independent 'frame', rather than as an integral part of the psalm. In both the Psalter and the books of Samuel, it functions as a "referential grounding": it sets up particular referents (e.g. people, objects, places, relationships, events, etc.) which help to structure the "world of the text".[7] It affects how other referents are identified and how certain 'frames of reference' (mental scenes) are interpreted.

---

[6] Jackson 2007: 16.
[7] Harshav 2007: 24.

Verse 1

To the leader; of the servant of YHWH,[8] *of David,*[9]	לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְעֶבֶד יְהוָה לְדָוִד
who spoke the words of this song[10] *to YHWH* *on the day when YHWH delivered him* *from the clutches of all his enemies* *and even from the grasp of Saul.*	אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לַיהוָה אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בְּיוֹם הִצִּיל־יְהוָה אוֹתוֹ מִכַּף כָּל־אֹיְבָיו וּמִיַּד שָׁאוּל

The events described are bound to one particular 'day' (cf. the poetic expression יום־אידי in v. 19), when David was delivered from all his enemies and even from Saul. Grammatically, ומיד can mean '*and even* from the hand' of Saul, which makes the most sense here, singling out Saul especially from amongst David's enemies.[11]

The enemy (in sg. and pl.) is mentioned again several times in the psalm (vv. 4, 18, 38, 41 and 49), on three occasions accompanied by different verbs of rescue.[12] The verb הציל here has particular connotations of being snatched away to safety, which is a recurring motif in the psalm. Of metaphorical interest here are the expressions מיד and מכף, commonly used to portray military power, capture and control.[13] They create vivid word-pictures with metonymic relations of grasping or seizing someone/-thing with one's hand, having control over something that is in one's hand, etc. While some translations prefer to keep the wording 'hand' (e.g. *NRSV*), the words 'clutches' and 'grasp' (used above) highlight the enemies' powerful reach and grip from which David has been rescued. This corresponds to the word-picture in v. 49 where God is praised for lifting the king up high out of the reach of his enemies.

---

[8] Cf. Ps 36.1 and Ps 144.10.

[9] ל is understood to denote the author (cf. Kraus 1993: 22).

[10] Cf. Deut 31.30 את־דברי השירה הזאת.

[11] BDB 252, cf. Chisholm 1983: 112; Kraus 1993: 254. Dahood's suggestion (1966: 104) to re-point the Hebrew to read 'Sheol' seems unnecessary, given the historical nature of the psalm title, cf. Pss 52.1, 54.1, 57.1, 59.1; see also 1 Sam 18.29; 19.17; 2 Sam 4.8, etc.

[12] ישע hi., נצל hi. and פלט pi in vv. 4, 18 and 49 respectively.

[13] E.g. 1 Sam 4.3; 2 Sam 19.10.

Words and Pictures in Verses 2–3

Verse 2

And he said,[14]	וַיֹּאמַר
I love you O YHWH, my strength,	אֶרְחָמְךָ יְהוָה חִזְקִי

The song's own overture sets an intimate frame, addressing YHWH personally with a declaration of love and praise that establishes the psalm in the context of a close relationship between the psalmist and YHWH. As רחם is only used of divine love in the HB, the popular emendation to ארממך (from רום 'to exalt') is both plausible and understandable in light of the theme of height and exaltation that is prevalent in the psalm, cf. Ps 30.1; 145.1.[15] This would create an *inclusio* of exaltation and praise at the beginning and end of the psalm (v. 47f). However, it is not impossible that such a strongly emotive word could have been used, considering the close relationship with YHWH that lies at the heart of the psalm (v. 20ff).[16] The case for ארחמך is further supported by the LXX, Vg, Tg, P, and a variant in 11QPs^{c}, which appears to be a qatal form of רחם.[17]

The unique epithet חזקי provides an intriguing example of a metaphorical frame of reference. Interestingly, 2 Sam 22.2 lacks all of v. 2 (except ויאמר), beginning directly with יהוה סלעי. If this was a later gloss in the psalm it was made with great skill, as it sings out the theme of strength which underpins the whole narrative of deliverance and victory in the psalm. It is not immediately clear whether 'strength' refers to the king's military might, to his physical or emotional strength (courage), or to some combination of all three. Neither is it clear exactly how the analogy between YHWH and the king's strength is to be understood. Unlike the word-pictures of YHWH in the following verse, which use familiar and concrete objects, this one uses a more abstract and ambiguous source domain. In light of the model outlined at the end of Chapter 2, the meaning of this word-picture will emerge only from a consideration of other frames of reference in the psalm relating to both 'strength' and the char-

[14] The pausal form indicates that וַיֹּאמַר should be regarded as the final word of the psalm's introduction (Sanders 2000: 291–292).

[15] This solution was first proposed by Ferdinand Hitzig in 1863 (*Die Psalmen übersetzt und ausgelegt, ad loc.*, cit. in Evans 2010: 659) and is recommended in BHS.

[16] E.g. Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 122.

[17] Evans 2010.

acter of YHWH and from other descriptions or word-pictures of the model 'YHWH as strength'.

Feeding into the 'source domain' is information about related terms within the BH semantic field of חזק, of which a few will be briefly discussed here: חֻזְקָה denotes the strength of YHWH's grip (Isa 8.11), and the power, strength and wealth of a king who is established in his kingdom and rule (e.g. 2 Chr 12.1); חֹזֶק denotes the strength of YHWH's hand in deliverance (e.g. Exod. 13.3), YHWH's might (Isa 40.10) and national, military strength (e.g. Hag 2.22); חָזְקָה seems to have the additional connotation of force or violence (e.g. Judg 4.3); חַיִל denotes human strength and ability (e.g. Gen 47.6), the strength of a warrior (e.g. Judg 11.1), wealth (e.g. Gen 34.29) and an army (e.g. Exod 14.4). עֹז denotes human and divine strength (e.g. Exod 15.13; Judg 5.21) and occurs in Psalm 18 itself to describe the king's enemies as strong and mighty (עז, אמצו v. 18).

To grow strong (חזק) in a military sense results in superiority over another person or nation (e.g. Josh 17.13; Judg 1.28), an association that is certainly evident in the second half of Psalm 18. From the Psalms and the prophetic literature, it is clear that related terms for 'strength' (גבורה, עז, חיל, etc.) have strong semantic associations with trust (בטח) and salvation (ישועה), as well as images of refuge and protection, e.g. Ps 28.7–8. As will become clear from the discussion of Ps 18.3, trust, salvation and refuge provide significant semantic co-ordinates for interpreting the phrase יהוה חזקי.

Elsewhere in the HB, YHWH is the subject of the verb חזק, strengthening nations and kings (e.g. Judg 3.12; Isa 21.22). The verb חזק also occurs in a variety of different contexts as an exhortation, which is frequently associated with the assurance of YHWH's presence (e.g. Deut 31.6; Josh 1.6, 9, 18). At the end of Psalm 31, for example, all who wait on YHWH are encouraged to be strong (v. 25), which follows a thanksgiving for (an anticipated?) deliverance and an assurance that YHWH preserves the faithful (cf. Ps 105.4).

A few texts also establish a connection between strength and the obligation to keep the commandments. In Deut 11.8, strength is seen as a direct result of obedience to the commandments: 'Keep, then, this entire commandment that I am commanding you today, so that you may grow strong (חזק qal) and go and take possession of the land . . .' (cf. also Josh 1.7; Ezra 9.12). This is especially interesting with regard to Ps 18.21–32, in which the reason for the psalmist's deliverance is introduced as recompense for righteousness.

There are several word-pictures which aid the interpretation of this metaphor. In Hab 3.19 (a verse closely modelled on Ps 18.34) YHWH is addressed as חילי 'my strength' in the context of God setting his feet down like deer and establishing him on the heights—an image of agility, speed and sure-footedness in battle. עז is also used frequently to describe YHWH's relationship with his people, often in conjunction with terms of refuge and protection, e.g. Ps 46.1 ועז אלהים לנו מחסה (cf. Isa 12.2; Ps 118.14).

In the case of the target domain יהוה, this can be 'filled in' with aspects of YHWH's character (e.g. reliable: vv. 4, 7, 31; just: vv. 26–28), descriptions of his actions (e.g. supporting the king against his enemies: vv. 18–19; giving him super-human strength: v. 29; girding him with strength: vv. 33, 40; giving him victory and power: vv. 38–41, 51) and his relationship to the king within the psalm (e.g. as his place of refuge and protection: v. 3; as his deliverer: v. 3, 17), etc.

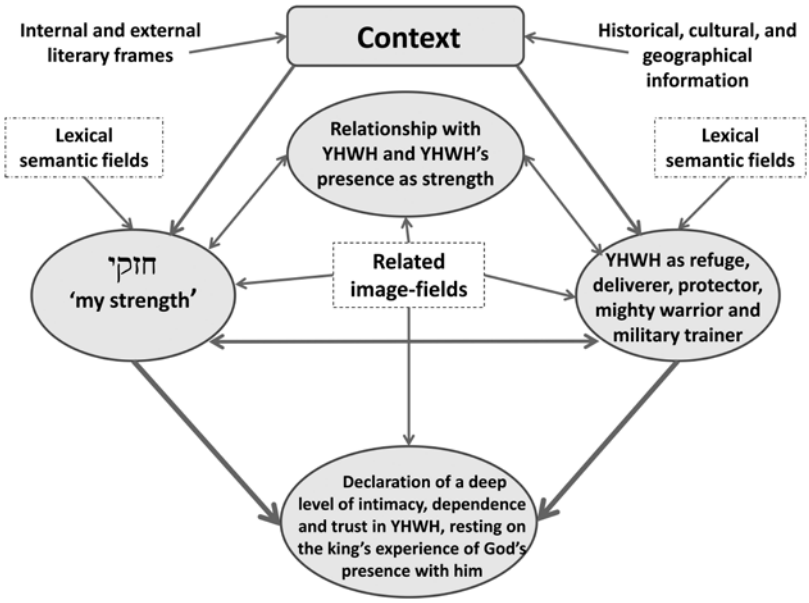

Fig. 6. A skeletal model of interpretation for v. 2.

The full force and meaning of this metaphor will only emerge after a close reading of the whole psalm and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9. It is only from the context of other frames of reference within the text that the 'messages' of this particular word-picture come to light. The king's

trusting relationship with YHWH gives him support, courage and deliverance in adversity, and YHWH's presence with him gives him superlative strength and victory (vv. 28–29).

Verse 3

The king's praise continues (this time in the 3rd person) in an abundant array of metaphorical word-pictures, confessing confidence in YHWH as the one who protects and delivers him in times of trouble.

YHWH is my rock and my stronghold and my deliverer	יְהוָה סַלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי וּמְפַלְטִי
My God is my cave[18] *in whom I seek refuge, my shield*	אֵלִי צוּרִי אֶחֱסֶה־בּוֹ מָגִנִּי
and the horn of my salvation, my strong tower	וְקֶרֶן־יִשְׁעִי מִשְׂגַּבִּי
And he said, O YHWH, my rock,	2 Sam 22 וַיֹּאמַר יְהוָה סַלְעִי
and my stronghold and my deliverer,	וּמְצָדָתִי וּמְפַלְטִי־לִי
My God is my cave in whom I seek refuge	אֱלֹהַי צוּרִי אֶחֱסֶה־בּוֹ
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my strong tower,	מָגִנִּי וְקֶרֶן־יִשְׁעִי מִשְׂגַּבִּי
and my refuge, my saviour, you save me from violence	וּמְנוֹסִי מֹשִׁעִי מֵחָמָס תּוֹשִׁיעֵנִי

סלע is used figuratively throughout the Psalms as a description or appellation of YHWH. Its common meaning elsewhere in the HB is a rocky or mountainous crag, that provides a dwelling place for animals[19] or a hiding place for humans.[20] סלע occurs several times in collocation (and often in parallelism) with מרום 'height', suggesting that such hiding places were high up (e.g. Isa 22.16; Jer 49.16). The theme of height (and spatial concepts more generally) will be followed throughout the psalm further on, as it recurs several times (vv. 3, 34 and 49 and implicitly in vv. 17 and 40).

סלע is also identified by the hardness of its rock (1 Kgs 19.11; Jer 5.3; 23.29), a characteristic which brings sharper definition to this word-picture of YHWH as reliable, strong and protective. סלע is a place of refuge for

[18] In this context סלע and צור appear to be synonymous, but the translation 'cave' aids the visualisation of the word-picture that is connected with this particular idea of refuge.

[19] E.g. for badgers (Prov 30.26), goats (Job 39.1), eagles (Job 39.28) and coneys (Ps 104.18).

[20] It occurs frequently as nomen rectum with סעיף 'cleft' (Judg 15.8, 11; Isa 2.21, 57.5), נקיק 'cleft' (Isa 7.19; Jer 13.4, 16.16), and חגוים 'places of concealment' (Jer 49.16; Oba 3; Song 2.14) which provide hiding-places, e.g. for Samson (Judg 15.8), and for the Israelites (1 Sam 13.6).

David when fleeing from Saul (1 Sam 23.25, 28), and in the Psalms it has strong associations with safety and protection (e.g. Ps 40.3). The personal address 'my rock' (סלעי) occurs in a similar form on three other occasions (twice with מצודה), picturing YHWH as a hiding-place from danger (Pss 31.4; 42.10; 71.3).

מצודה is used in the HB to describe a home for eagles, high up in a rock (Job 39.28); it is also a safe hiding place for David (1 Sam 22.4–5; 24.22) and denotes the settlement/fortifications of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5.7, 9, 17; 1 Chr 11.5), hence the rendering 'fortress' or 'stronghold'. In the Psalms, מצודה is twice associated with ישע salvation (31.3; 71.3) and it carries associations with בטח 'trust' (91.2). This word-picture therefore has connotations of security and protection from nature and from enemies. A similar image is found on the Gebel Barkal stela of Thutmose III, in celebration of his military achievements: "He is Horus, the strong-armed one, an excellent fortress for his armies, a refuge for the people . . . one who rescues Egypt on the field of battle".[21]

מפלטי introduces something new into the frame of YHWH's character that is described in this verse: YHWH is not only a 'place' of refuge and safety but also the 'agent' of deliverance and protection.[22] פלט, within the semantic field ישע,[23] usually has "a particular focus on the path to safety, arrival at safety or an ultimate state of safety", in addition to the general meaning of rescue.[24] This sense is particularly appropriate here, in the light of vv. 20, 34, 37 and the recurrence of the verb in v. 44.

צור in the HB refers to a large rock or boulder in which one can take shelter, use as a lookout (Num 23.9), a hiding-place from enemies (e.g. 1 Chr 11.15) or where protection is sought from YHWH (e.g. Exod 33.22; Isa 2.10). It is used in word-pictures of YHWH in numerous places and its use as a divine epithet is frequent in the Psalms.[25] The significance of this word-picture is indicated by the number of its occurrences at the opening or conclusion to a psalm,[26] and its use in statements of incomparability

---

[21] *CoS* II: 14.

[22] *Contra* Gunkel (1926: 68), who suggests the vocalisation מִפְלָטִי 'place of refuge' (cf. Ps 55.9).

[23] Sawyer 1972.

[24] Williams 2002: 438.

[25] E.g. Pss 28.1; 89.27, cf. also 1 Sam 2.2; 2 Sam 23.3. The relationship between images of a rock of protection, the cosmic cornerstone (Isa 28.16ff; Job 38.6) and Jerusalem temple rock (cf. Pss 46.6; 48.4) is complex (cf. Keel 1978: 181–182), but the primary associations generated by צור in this passage are of protection, refuge and safety (cf. Tate 1990: 114 and Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 104–109 on Ps 61.3).

[26] E.g. 18.3, 47; 19.15; 28.1; 31.3.

(e.g. 1 Sam 2.2; 2 Sam 22.32 = Ps 18.32; Isa 44.8). In Moses' Song, which has a number of lexical and conceptual connections with Psalm 18 (e.g. Deut 32.30–1, cf. Ps 18.32), other deities are also referred to as צור (Deut 32.31, 37 with חסה).[27]

It is interesting that צור is commonly used in personal names, e.g. Zur (Num 25.15), Zuriel (Num 3.35), Zurishaddai (Num 1.6) and Pedahzur (Num 7.54), whereas סלע is often used in place names and as a place-name itself, e.g. Rock of Etam (Judg 15.8, 11), Rock of Rimmon (Judg 20.45, 47, 21.3) the Rock of Escape (1 Sam 23.28). This emphasizes the prominence of the relational dimension to צור, which perhaps was not the case with סלע. Interestingly, סלע is omitted from a similar 'string' of ascriptions of YHWH in Ps 144.2 (replaced by חסד), whereas צור occurs rather prominently in v. 1.

חסה is found in this form twice in the Psalms in word-pictures with other terms for 'refuge/shelter' (57.2; 61.5), and the relationship between rock and refuge is found in numerous places (e.g. Deut 32.27; Ps 31.3). Creach's analysis of the חסה word-field reveals a constellation of terms that "communicate the common idea of dependence on Yahweh over against other sources of protection".[28] Calling YHWH 'my rock' and 'my cave in whom I seek refuge' is therefore an expression of confidence and trust in the protective presence of YHWH and in his ability to save.

מגן is the most frequently used term for a military shield in the HB and may refer to the standard shield carried by most Israelite warriors.[29] In Prov 6.11 and 24.34 מגן occurs as *nomen rectum* with איש as an expression of an 'armed warrior' (cf. also Ezek 27.10). מָגֵן is thought to refer to a small round shield, similar to שלט (2 Sam 8.7) and it is paired several times with צנה, a long body shield.[30] Keel's survey of iconographical evidence suggests that the מגן would have been used to defend the warrior from overhead missiles, while the standing shield or protective wall was used as a siege shield.[31]

---

[27] See Knowles 1989.

[28] Creach 1996: 48.

[29] E.g. Judg 5.8; 2 Sam 1.21; 2 Kgs 19.32.

[30] E.g. Ezek 23.24; Jer 46.3; Ps 35.2. On the basis of this collocation, it seems likely that מגן and צנה were distinct weapons (cf. Freedman and O'Connor 1997: 74, *contra* Hugger 1971: 99–100).

[31] Keel 1978: 222.

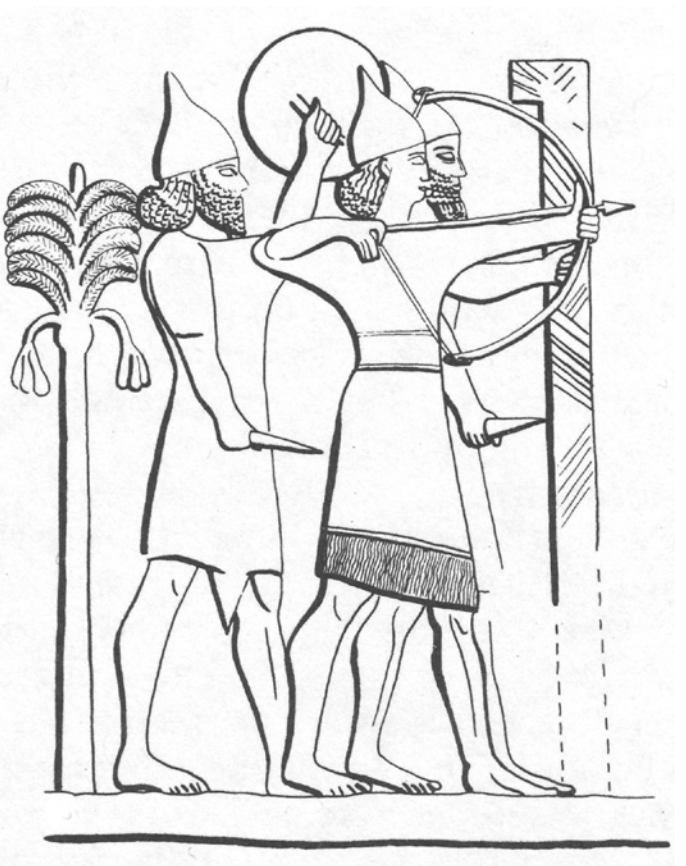

Fig. 7. An eighth-century relief depicting the protection of an Assyrian general (Keel 1978: 222 fig. 304).

The shield, as a warrior's primary defensive weapon in combat, provides one of the most powerful symbols used in the ancient Near East to describe one's relationship to the divine, appearing extensively in Assyrian and Egyptian literature and iconography. Ps 140.8 sheds further light on this word-picture: יהוה אדני עז ישועתי סכתה לראשי ביום נשק. Arne Wiig attributes the effectiveness of the 'shield metaphor' to the shield's function "as a concrete boundary between life and death" in battle.[32] A warrior's experience of trusting in his shield to defend his life makes it an extremely powerful analogy to describe faith in the steadfast protection of one's deity and the intimacy of the relationship. Ishtar's assurance

[32] Wiig 1999: 25.

to King Esarhaddon: "I am your reliable shield" is not only a guarantee of divine protection but also expresses a deeply personal commitment of care.[33]

However, מגן did not simply have a protective and defensive function but also had conceptual associations of military attack (e.g. Ps 59.12; 2 Kgs 19.32=Isa 37.33). Creach's suggestion, that מגן has lost its original associations here and has become a dead metaphor highlights some of the problems with identifying and interpreting conventional metaphors or idioms.[34] It is difficult to discern whether or not the original military associations with 'shield' are ever completely absent from the word-picture. In the case of Psalm 18, although the immediate co-text lacks specific battle imagery, Creach seems to be ignoring the 'world of the text'—a thanksgiving song for victory in battle. The way in which מגן is employed throughout the psalm needs careful attention before naming it a dead metaphor.

The basic meaning of קרן is the 'horn' of an animal, which occurs in word-pictures describing both victory and defeat, deriving from the image of an animal with its head and horns lifted high in triumph or its horns cut off as a sign of humiliation.[35] 'Horn' has thus become associated with the strength and glory of victory and also with self-exaltant pride (e.g. Ps 75.5–6, 8, 11). However, קרן־ישעי in Psalm 18 is a unique expression inviting us to see YHWH as the source of victory and power: 'YHWH is the strength of my salvation', or 'YHWH is my saving strength' (cf. Ps 20.7; 25.5; 27.9).[36] Nowhere else is YHWH identified with a horn—rather, he is the one who lifts up or cuts off another's horn (e.g. Ps 89.18). This interpretation is confirmed by depictions of Mesopotamian deities with horns symbolising their strength, and a report of the goddess Ninlil defeating Assurbanipal's enemies with her 'strong horns'.[37]

Although the construct relationship קרן ישעי is unique in this verse, the alternative reading of קרן as 'hill' or 'peak' (arguably found in Isa 5.1), may be supported by the occurrence of צור ישעי in 2 Sam 22.47 (cf. צור ישענו in Ps 95.1 and the connections between ישועה and other terms of refuge

---

[33] *ANET* 605.

[34] Creach 1996: 29–30.

[35] E.g. with רום (1 Sam 2.1, 10; Ps 75.5, 6, 11, etc.) and with גדע (Ps 75.11; Jer 48.25, etc.) respectively.

[36] The *NJPS* translation substitutes this image with a more personal one—"my mighty champion", which is perhaps more accessible but loses the important associations of salvation.

[37] Hilber 2009: 332.

in Ps 62).[38] Whether or not קרן in Isa 5.1 means 'hill' or simply 'corner' or 'nook' (cf. Arab. and MH),[39] it is possible that קרן in Ps 18.3 could be semantically influenced by its surrounding terms. If one considers the shape of a hill and a horn, it would be unwise to exclude the possibility that קרן here is an intentional 'picture-play' on 'hill' and 'horn', both of which can express faith in God as the source of strength and victory.

Of the 12 occurrences of משגב in the Psalter, 11 describe YHWH in a simile or metaphor.[40] The verb שגב has the general meaning 'be high' (e.g. Deut 2.36), and thus משגב refers to a 'safe height', or a city's fortifications or stronghold (e.g. Isa 25.12). It appears elsewhere in the Psalms with other similar terms, e.g. with צור and ישועה (Ps 62.3); with צור and מחסה (Ps 94.22). Height offers refuge and security and is also associated with exaltation (e.g. Ps 107.41), an idea which comes into play in the second half of the psalm.

2 Samuel 22 also includes the epithet מנוסי 'my refuge', derived from the root נוס 'to flee', which depicts YHWH as a place to which the king can escape (cf. the use of the verb in military contexts, e.g. Josh 8.20; 2 Sam 18.3; 19.4[3]). In Ps 59.16, the psalmist praises YHWH's past faithfulness as a משגב and a מנוס on the day of his distress (צר), cf. Jer 16.19. The final part of this verse in 2 Samuel 22 adds a particular image to the idea of YHWH as an active rescuer (מֹשִׁעִי, cf. v. 42), saving him from (acts of?) violence (חמס). The noun חמס has a wide semantic range, including juridical contexts (e.g. Exod 23.1; Deut 19.16; Ps 7.17), social injustice (e.g. Isa 59.6; 60.18) and physical violence and destruction on a national level (e.g. Jer 13.22; Ezek 7.11). This description of YHWH stands out in its context, not only by describing YHWH's relationship to the king as his saviour, but also by naming the threat from which he saves him. It will be discussed further in the context of its use as an interpretative aid in v. 49.

Interpretation: vv. 2–3

Verse 3 begins the process of 'filling in' the meaning of the opening statement 'I love you, O YHWH, my strength', with images of YHWH as a natural place of refuge, a man-made fortress, a shield and a horn of salvation. These express the king's experience of relationship with YHWH and of

---

[38] Cf. LXX Isa 5.1 κέρας and Tg. טור רם.
[39] Cf. Kedar-Kopfstein 2004: 171.
[40] E.g. Pss 48.4; 59.10.

YHWH's very presence as a source of strength, courage and refuge that provides support, deliverance and salvation. In a number of commentaries, this string of metaphors is by-passed or treated in a general way as if each metaphor was essentially providing the same information, although there is not much agreement on the actual focus of the metaphors.[41] Brettler's proposal, that the terms are all connected to the sphere of 'strength', may initially seem appealing in the light of v. 2. He argues that סלע and צור 'metaphorically come to mean strength' and have been 'absorbed into the field of strength'.[42] However, one should be careful not to miss the individual associations of each word at the expense of finding a 'root metaphor', or some common 'sphere' embracing all the images. Each word-picture brings with it a vast range of lexical and conceptual associations.

The static images from the concrete world that are employed in v. 3 to paint the king's relationship with YHWH (e.g. rock, cave, shield), create some interesting conceptual 'spaces'. From a cognitive semantic perspective, natural features of the Palestinian landscape were of vital importance to Israel, which was under frequent military attack from all sides.[43] Thus, in a royal psalm of thanksgiving for YHWH's help, particularly in terms of military success, such metaphors that have associations with defensive hiding-places in battle would be a natural choice for expressing thanks and confidence in YHWH as the one who provides such protection. Refuge in the mountains gives one a position of strength and the advantage of height, a common feature of the word-pictures in these verses. The significance of height as a place of safety, away from distress, belongs to what King describes as the 'verticality' image schema in BH, according to which 'negative experience is partially understood . . . as movement up and down, or position upon, a vertical scale'.[44] Through the word-picture 'my rock in whom I seek refuge' the psalmist utilizes not only what the rock 'is' (i.e. a cave) but also what the rock 'does' (in terms of what it provides). Affirming God as 'my cave' reflects his experience of being strengthened and protected by YHWH's presence.

The lexemes צור and סלע dominate the verse by their prominent position. The image of a 'rock' in a word-picture allows the psalmist to say several things about his relationship with God and his experience of God's actions: it pictures God as a place painted with the colours of strength,

---

41 Cf. Kraus 1993: 259; Craigie 2004: 173; Keel 1978: 181.
42 Brettler 1989: 58.
43 Cf. Hilber 2009: 332.
44 King 2012: 139.

stability, permanence, refuge and protection. For someone seeking protection from enemies in the mountains, the hiding-place is a source of hope and an object of trust. When the psalmist calls God '*my* rock', he expresses his experience of relationship with God as a rock that he hopes in, the one in whom he trusts.

These pictures of rocky refuges are surrounded by other symbols of strength (קרן ישעי) and protection (מגן). Thus YHWH is pictured here not only as a place of sanctuary but also as a personal protector, the source of the psalmist's strength for battle and his deliverer. The convergence of images of YHWH as both a place of sanctuary and a personal protector and deliverer that occurs several times in the Psalms (28.8; 31.3; 71.3; 144.2) is one of the significant points of metaphorical transference in this psalm. The root פלט holds these two images together, with its dual emphasis on rescue and arrival at a place of safety.

The scenes that follow set a vivid scene of the psalmist's need and his cry to YHWH for help. Verse 4, a general statement of confidence in YHWH's saving response to the psalmist's need,[45] together with v. 7, provides a frame of somewhat 'plainer' speech for the metaphors in-between. Verses 5–6 build a vivid and emotive picture of the danger threatening the psalmist and the power of his enemies, painted here in cosmic colours. With a root play in vv. 4 and 7 on ישע and שוע, we are left in no doubt that YHWH is faithfully committed to deliver him from whatever distress or trouble befalls him.

Words and Pictures in Verses 4–7

Verse 4

I cry to YHWH, who is worthy to be praised,	מְהֻלָּל[46] אֶקְרָא יְהוָה
And from my enemies I am saved	וּמִן־אֹיְבַי אִוָּשֵׁעַ

In the light of vv. 18–19 and 38ff, the 'enemies' here are understood primarily as military opponents, but the word-pictures that follow paint a struggle against cosmic powers. It becomes clear that these forces are part of an extended metaphor used to describe the historical military victories referred to later on and that it is important to hold both cosmic and

[45] The yiqtol form אקרא here expresses a general present tense.

[46] The pu. ptcp. is rather awkward here, although it is found elsewhere (e.g. Ps 113.3). It is tempting to follow 11QPs^{c} in reading מְחֻלָּל (cf. Isa 53.5).

human enemies in mind throughout the psalm. In vv. 5–18, a mythical and metaphorical narrative is employed to illustrate YHWH's sovereignty by universalizing particular acts of intervention on behalf of the king.

Verse 5

The ropes of death encompassed me	אֲפָפוּנִי חֶבְלֵי־מָוֶת
(The waves of death closed in over me[47]	(2 Sam 22 כִּי אֲפָפֻנִי מִשְׁבְּרֵי־מָוֶת
and the torrents of destruction were overwhelming me.	וְנַחֲלֵי בְלִיַּעַל יְבַעֲתוּנִי

The verb אפף, meaning 'surround' or 'encompass' is used in extreme situations to 'convey the idea of intense suffering'.[48] As a source domain, or source 'image', the idea of being surrounded and hemmed in is very versatile, as we can see from the lexical variants between the two versions. One can be hemmed in by ropes as in a trap, or engulfed by waves, just as one can be surrounded by enemy forces in battle (cf. Ps 40.13). A similar word-picture occurs in Jon 2.6 with the subject מים in a hymn of thanks for deliverance, which supports the reading of משברי here. Both images depict a victim submerged by waves, drowning, echoed in v. 17, where YHWH reaches down and pulls him out of the water.

In three other places משברים (2 Sam 22) describe YHWH's wrath and punishment which have 'gone over' (Ps 42.8, cf. Jon 2.4) and 'overwhelmed' the psalmist (Ps 88.8, cf. Ps 40.13). Here the waves are those of the underworld, the watery regions beneath the earth. An interesting conceptual parallel is found in the Babylonian Hymn to Shamash, in which *hubur*, the underworld river, symbolizes trouble,[49] and in a description of being rescued from it in 'Ludlul Bel Nemeqi': "the lord rescued me from the pit, set me on my feet, took me by the hand, pulled me out of the river (*hubur*)".[50]

חבל in Psalm 18, meaning cord or rope, is connected etymologically with a net/snare (cf. Akk. *ebēlu* Arab. *ḥabala*),[51] and could be used as a

---

[47] Some commentators prefer the 2 Samuel 22 version here, substituting משברי 'waves' for חבלי on the basis that it forms a good parallel to נחלי in the second stich and avoids repetition with v. 6 (e.g. Kraus 1993: 255; Curtis 2004: 37). Although חבלי could be repeated for effect (cf. its collocation with מות in Ps 116.3), the argument for accepting the 2 Sam 22 version as original on stylistic grounds seems to carry more weight.

[48] Allen 1997: 482.

[49] Lambert 1960: 128–9 (line 62).

[50] Lambert 1960: 58–9.

[51] Fabry 1980: 172.

noose or to make a net (Ps 140.6).[52] Word-pictures of hunting, particularly trapping, are quite common in prayers for deliverance from enemies and persecutors and are used in a variety of different ways.[53] In the word-picture here 'Death' seems to be personified as a hunter who has caught the psalmist in his ropes and held him fast.

Rashi interprets חבלי as 'military bands', akin to the 'band of prophets' in 1 Sam 10.5, 10, regarding both 'bands of death' and 'torrents of belial' as substitutionary metaphors meaning 'military troops'. He refers to *Tg Jon* 2 Sam 22.6 which interprets 'bands of death' as 'troops of wicked people'. Although the word חבל is not intended to mean a military band, Rashi's interpretation shows great insight into the deeper level of this word-picture. This deeper level is activated by the particular verbs chosen by the poet, such that the reader is led to 'see' the military enemies 'as' the cords and the torrents.

מות is described frequently in figurative language both as a place and as a person. There are references to 'going down' to death (Prov 2.18; 5.5), to the 'gates' of death (Job 38.17; Ps 9.14; 107.18) and the 'chambers' of death (Prov 7.27). It is a place where there is no remembrance of YHWH (Ps 6.6). In 2 Samuel 22, the word-picture אפפוני משברי־מות is an 'orientational' metaphor—it describes the psalmist's distress in terms of a 'location', surrounded by the waves of the place of death, the watery underworld.

In Psalm 18, however, the difference of a single word and its associations shifts the metaphor from one of orientation to one of personification. Here the net of ropes belongs to 'Death', the hunter (cf. חבלי־מות Ps 116.3 and מוקשי־מות Prov 13.14; 14.27; 21.6). As a person or agent, death is described elsewhere as a murderer that is never satisfied (e.g. Jer 18.21; Hab 2.5). This belongs to part of a wider model of battle as a hunt, a common conceptualisation in ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography. As we shall see, this imagery dominates the following verse and is probably out of place in v. 5, lending weight to the originality of the 2 Samuel 22 version.

נחל is one of a number of terms for 'river' in the HB (e.g. Job 20.17). Unlike a deep, permanent river (נהר), its usual meaning is a torrent or a fast-flowing stream, which occurred frequently in Palestine due to flash flooding in the winter or rainy season. It can also mean a torrent-bed, since such floods can dry up as quickly as they come (Gen 26.17;

---

[52] Keel 1978: 93.

[53] E.g. Pss 9.16; 10.9; 64.5; 69.23; 91.3.

1 Kgs 17.4–7). The Wadi Kishon is mentioned in the Song of Deborah (Judg 5.21) as sweeping away (גרף) the enemy, highlighting the force of such floods and the potential destruction they can cause.

The figurative uses of נחל are rich and varied, but there are two striking word-pictures which paint the word in a military context: armies are described as waters which will become like overflowing torrents to flood the land in Jer 47.2, and in Ps 124.4–5, a communal thanksgiving for deliverance, enemies are described as waters that could have swept them away, using הזידונים המים 'raging waters'[54] as a parallel term to נחל. An interesting conceptual parallel can be found in 2 Sam 5.20, where David describes YHWH's help in his victory against the Philistines as a 'bursting flood': פרץ יהוה את איבי לפני כפרץ מים. Palestine's experience of extreme climatic contrasts of storms and droughts makes water a versatile image in the Psalter, either as 'a hostile force or as a source of sustenance'.[55] In the Psalms, water and waves function as powerful symbols of threat, danger, chaos and enemies (e.g. Pss 32.6; 69.1) and are even used to describe YHWH's own treatment of the psalmist (e.g. Ps 42.8, cf. Jon 2.4, 6).

The use of בליעל in Psalm 18 appears to be somewhat different from other occurrences of the word elsewhere in the HB that have connotations of wickedness.[56] A number of translators attempt to make it compatible with these, interpreting נחלי בליעל as floods or torrents of 'ungodliness' (*ASV*, *NASB*), 'torrents of worthlessness' (BDB 636a),[57] or 'ungodly men' (*KJV*), cf. LXX χείμαρροι ἀνομίας, Vg. *torrentes iniquitatis*.[58] Although בליעל has an uncertain etymology, there are two main explanations (with numerous variations): one based on a compound (בלי+ יעל /על /עלה) and the other that derives בליעל from the root בלע.[59] Its parallelism with death

---

[54] זיד is used elsewhere to describe both the Egyptians (Exod 18.11) and the Babylonians (Jer 50.29).

[55] Brown 2002: 105.

[56] E.g. Deut 13.14; Judg 19.22; 20.13. A person is called בליעל in the context of their disregard for YHWH and cultic laws (e.g. Deut 13.14; 1 Sam 2.12; cf. Nah 1.11), disrespect for the king (e.g. 1 Sam 10.27; 2 Sam 20.1; 2 Chr 13.7), or for those who pervert social justice (e.g. Judg 19.22; 1 Sam 30.22; I Kgs 21.10).

[57] Although interestingly, under 'בליעל' is the translation 'floods of destruction' (BDB 116a).

[58] Vg. (iuxta Hebr.) Ps 18 has instead *torrentes diabuli*, contrasted with Vg. 2 Sam 22.5 *torrentes Belial*.

[59] One proposal is that it derives from יעל 'to profit/benefit', i.e. 'worthless' from qal, or the nominal form 'worthlessness' (see e.g. Baudissin 1896/97, 44; cf. BDB 116a). Other explanations have focused on the derivation בלי+עלה, in various forms, understanding בליעל as a term for the underworld or as a personification of this realm, e.g. Cheyne 1895; 1896/97; cf. Craigie 2004: 173). An apocopated form of יעלה and the use of בלי to negate

and Sheol here has led to assumptions that it can be used as another term for the underworld.[60]

Winton Thomas derives his translation from בלע 'swallow', suggesting 'the swallower' or 'the abyss that engulfs', on the basis of its parallel with Sheol and death.[61] Emerton puts a strong case for rejecting such an explanation in the case of בני־בליעל, supported by examples of בלע pi. which have a general sense of 'destroy' or 'confuse' (e.g. Isa 3.12; 19.3; Job 2.3; Lam 2.2, 8).[62] In this verse Emerton therefore understands the term as an abstract concept of 'destruction'.[63]

However, the interpretation of this word-picture has to be guided by its immediate co-text, משברי מות or חבלי מות, in the previous stich. The personification of death as a hunter in Psalm 18 might incline us to regard בליעל also as a personification—'the destroyer' or 'the swallower', although this sits less well with נחלי. In 2 Samuel 22 the 'waves' of death suggest that both word-pictures are describing the location of (threatening) death and destruction. Like 'death' and Sheol, בליעל therefore seems to be located in the depths, the watery abyss that engulfs, swallows and destroys, and because of its capacity to destroy, is sometimes personified as a destroyer, or a 'swallower'. When torrents rush through the land, they destroy by 'swallowing up' or engulfing whatever lies in their path. Whatever the precise etymology of בליעל, the senses of 'destroy' and 'swallow' are not in opposition in this word-picture. The torrents of destruction are associated with the terrifying spheres of power such as Sheol and death that are opposed to the 'ordered-ness' of life and with the location of the deep and chaotic waters of the underworld.[64]

---

a verb would both be unusual, although they are possible (cf. Ugar. *blmt* 'immortality'). G. R. Driver (1934: 53) argues instead that the current MT vocalisation is not original, proposing that בליעל is derived from the root בלע with affomative ל (like ערפל), with the possible meaning 'confusion', cf. Arab. *balagha*. The original vocalization would therefore have been בְּלִעַל or בְּלִיעַל.

60 Winton Thomas 1963: 19; McCarter 1984: 363, 373, 452, 465.

61 Winton Thomas 1963: 18.

62 Emerton 1987: 216, cf. Baudissin 1896/7: 43.

63 Emerton 1987: 217; cf. [floods of] "destruction" (*ESV*, *NLT*). Others have personified this destructive force, e.g. "the devourer" (Keel 1978: 72), "der Verderber" (Seybold 1996: 76).

64 The semantic development of בליעל can be traced through the DSS to the identification of 'Belial' with all that is opposed to God, goodness, and order. The unique pairing with נחלי in Ps 18 occurs several times in the DSS, in contexts of destruction (e.g. 1QH 3.29, 32; 5.39; cf. 1QH 11[3].29–31), where it refers to channels of consuming fire. There are also strikingly similar personifications of Belial to those of death and Sheol as a hunter in Ps 18, e.g. מצודות בליעל 'snares of Belial' (CD 4.15), פחי בליעל 'snares of Belial' (4QPsa 1.2.10).

The action ascribed to the נחלי בליעל is בעת (pi.), a verb used to describe a sudden attack or ambush,[65] and carries associations of terror and judgment.[66] The nominal form בעות (Ps 88.17) describes YHWH's assaults on the psalmist, which surround (סבב) him like a flood (מים), cf. משבריך (v.8), an interesting (and what looks like a deliberate) inversion of the word-picture in Psalm 18. Here, this verb therefore describes the psalmist's experience of being overwhelmed and terrified by a destructive and chaotic power, commensurate with the force of sudden, onrushing torrents, against which the psalmist is defenceless. Only YHWH can save him.

Verse 6

The ropes of Sheol surrounded me	חֶבְלֵי שְׁאוֹל סְבָבוּנִי
And the snares of death sprang up at me	קִדְּמוּנִי מוֹקְשֵׁי מָוֶת

As we have already noted above, 'ropes' were used like a net as a means of ensnaring an enemy or prey. Here the ropes belong to Sheol, personified as a hunter who has trapped the psalmist on all sides. In ancient Sumerian, a hunt was denoted by a sign meaning 'to surround', indicating that hunts originally involved trapping animals in nets or pits.[67] The conceptual model of 'battle as a hunt' was a common and powerful one and generates a variety of descriptions of enemies as hunters in the Psalms and elsewhere.[68]

שאול is the most common term in the HB for the underworld. As in this passage, it occurs numerous times in parallel with מות.[69] The most frequent description of Sheol is of its depths and of people 'going down'.[70] Like 'death', it is pictured as a place (Isa 38.10) and it is also frequently personified with a mouth (Ps 141.7) like that of a huge sea monster, that 'swallows' people up (Prov 1.12; cf. Jon 2.3) and whose appetite is never satisfied (Prov 27.20; Isa 5.14; Hab 2.5). Sheol has power over those who 'go down' (Ps 89.49), where there is no possibility of praising Yahweh (Ps 6.6; Isa 38.18). Only Yahweh can overcome this power (Ps 49.16; Hos 13.14). Here Sheol has caught the psalmist as its prey and is about to swallow him.

---

65 Cf. "plötzlich überfallen" (Ges[18] 1987: I.166).
66 E.g. Job 7.14; 9.34; Isa 21.4.
67 Keel 1978: 89.
68 E.g. Pss 9.16; 31.5, cf. Ezek 17.20; Hab 1.14–15.
69 E.g. Pss 6.6; 49.15; Prov 5.5; 7.27 (and also with בור 'pit', e.g. Ps 30.4; Prov 1.12).
70 E.g. Gen 37.35; 42.38; Deut 32.22.

סבב, echoing אפף from the previous verse, reinforces the idea that the danger is on all sides. There is no escape for the psalmist except to be rescued by one mightier than the forces trapping him (cf. v. 18). סבב occurs several times in the Psalms to describe the threat of enemies and evildoers[71] and is used elsewhere to describe military enemies surrounding or besieging a city in battle[72] or of individuals posing a (sometimes mortal) threat.[73] This picture presents the second conceptualisation of distress. In the previous verse, the distress is seen as being submerged in chaotic and destructive water. In this one, the distress is a narrow place of being trapped, surrounded and confined—having one's freedom restricted—a motif that is picked up in v. 7 and again in v. 20.

In BH מוקש usually refers to a trip wire or concealed net[74] and is often used figuratively for anything that causes someone's downfall.[75] Keel describes a מוקש as a hunter's snare for trapping birds (Josh 23.13), which operates by two bows (the 'arms' of the trap) snapping shut, enclosing the prey in a net, or a weapon that can resemble a throwing stick.[76] The expression מוקשי מות appears twice elsewhere (Prov 13.14; 14.27), where the 'snares of death' are to be avoided through wisdom and the fear of God. This psalm is the only instance where מוקש is the subject of a verb.

קדם (pi.) is used figuratively in a positive and negative sense. Negatively it can describe dangers 'confronting' people in an attack, e.g. the shield of the king of Assyria 'coming against' Jerusalem (2 Kgs 19.32=Isa 37.33). The same verb is picked up later in the psalm at v. 19 when the psalmist describes his enemies confronting him. Here he is ensnared and held fast by the deadly traps of Sheol and Death.

---

71 Pss 17.11; 109.3.

72 E.g. Josh 6.4; 7.9; 1 Kgs 5.17.

73 Gen 19.4; Judg 16.2; 19.22; 20.5; 2 Sam 18.15.

74 Domeris 1997: 526.

75 E.g. to describe Moses as a threat to the Egyptians (Exod 10.7), foreign gods being a trap for Israel (Deut 7.16), the lips of a foolish man that might cause him to stumble (Prov 18.7), evil deeds (Prov 29.6) or the plots of the wicked (Ps 64.6).

76 Keel 1978: 89ff. פח and מוקש often occur in parallel (e.g. Josh 23.13; Pss 140.6; 141.9; Isa 8.14; Amos 3.5) and seem to be distinguished by size and mechanism. מוקש can be used to describe the trigger of a small trap (פח), as seems to be implied by Amos 3.5 (cf. Ps 140.6), or the whole trap, which could be a large net closed by cords (cf. Gerleman 1945–46: 79–90).

Verse 7

In my distress I cried to YHWH and to my God I cried[77]	בַּצַּר־לִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וְאֶל־אֱלֹהַי אֲשַׁוֵּעַ
He heard my voice from his temple	יִשְׁמַע מֵהֵיכָלוֹ קוֹלִי
and my cry before him came to his ears	וְשַׁוְעָתִי לְפָנָיו תָּבוֹא בְאָזְנָיו

צר ('narrowness' or 'distress') is a prime example of a lexicalized metaphor that depicts distress as a narrow and confined place. צר is often paralleled by terms expressing distress and affliction as well as fear.[78] Its use here reinforces the pictures of being cramped and restricted in a snare or net from the previous verse. As elsewhere in the Psalms, this cry is contrasted further on in the psalm with pictures of space and 'wide-ness' (vv. 20, 37, cf. Pss 4.2; 25.17; 31.8). King's research on the 'constraint' image schema in BH highlights the significance of the experience of being constrained or confined which gives rise to numerous depictions of distress, including the anxiety of a woman in labour (which is compared to the fear of warriors who are facing an invasion, e.g. Jer 6.24; 48.41; 49.22), being imprisoned (Gen 40.3) and hemmed in by a besieging army (Deut 28.52; 1 Kgs 8.37/2 Chr 6.28).[79]

An important rhetorical feature of this section is the use of spatial imagery, which can be traced throughout the psalm. In v. 3 the psalmist addresses YHWH as 'my stronghold . . . my secure height', connecting the idea of safety and protection with high places. Then the imagery moves to the depths, to Sheol and the realm of death, expressing extreme danger and separation from God, only to swing back again to the heights of the heavenly temple in v. 7. The anthropomorphic metaphor here of the psalmist's cry coming to YHWH's ears conveys the distance between the petitioner and YHWH—the prayer has to 'travel' to reach God. In response to the psalmist's cry, YHWH then descends from the heights of heaven to rescue him (v. 10ff). A similar affirmation of divine 'answering' can be seen in the Egyptian Votive Stela of Nebre from the New Kingdom:

> When I call to you in my distress
> You come to rescue me . . .
> You are he who comes from afar.[80]

---

[77] The translation of the *yiqtol* verb forms in this verse into the past tense regards the narrative as a continuation of the preterite which was established in the preceding verses.

[78] E.g. Deut 31.17, 21; 1 Sam 10.19.

[79] King 2012: 140–209.

[80] Lichtheim 1976: 105–106.

The understanding of היכל here provides a helpful illustration of the flexibility of metaphorical language. If the one singing this psalm is close to the Jerusalem temple, this verse would create a picture of YHWH hearing his cry in the earthly temple. When the temple was destroyed, the

Interpretation: vv. 4–7

It is often noted that this passage contains 'vague' language of distress, particularly common in individual complaint songs, which could point to cultic formulae or a later modification of "individual tendencies" for the community.[81] While such language does allow the Psalm to be used on different occasions of thanksgiving, we should be careful not to assume that this was always, or necessarily, the author's intention. The language here is not so much deliberately vague as intentionally pregnant with meaning. The word-pictures use cosmic and universal images but in the context of this psalm they carry particular meanings.

On one level the psalmist's situation is, as Macky's translation puts it, one of dire need: "the psalmist was at the point of death".[82] Trouble and danger are experienced as, and imagined as, being submerged and surrounded, overcome and constricted: he is overwhelmed by 'waves' and caught in deadly traps. All four metaphors in vv. 5–6 together build a picture of utter desperation in the face of an ineluctable fate and communicate the power of death surrounding and overwhelming him. In a sense, the psalmist counts himself as already dead—already caught in Sheol. Janowski observes that in metaphors of death in some of the Psalms, death is seen as present in the midst of life: "Der so erfahrene Tod ist nicht nur der *vorgestellte* Tod, sondern als Negation des erfüllten Lebens ist eine Form des *realen* Todes".[83] Thus the situation of the psalmist could be termed "Unterwelt der Lebenden", a place in which the power of death from the realm of the 'beyond' breaks into life.[84]

However, being attuned to the flexibility of metaphorical transference within a textual unit should prevent us from stopping at an initial reading that is isolated from its wider literary context, as Macky does. These pictures are enveloped by references to 'enemies' (vv. 4 and 7), and several

[81] Gunkel 1933: 184.
[82] Macky 1990: 65.
[83] Janowski 2009: 114.
[84] Janowski 2009: 115.

words also have strong military associations (נחל, סבב, קדם and צר) that create mental scenes of enemy attack and 'blend' into the word-picture. Such an interpretation is strengthened by the interplay of these metaphors with the theophanic pictures of victory over enemies which follow, and the paintings of military victory in the second half of the psalm. The verbs in vv. 5–6 suggest that the dangers and traps are active forces, which emphasize their power to overwhelm, terrify and destroy.

The interpretation of this section is therefore significantly enhanced by identifying two underlying and interrelated conceptual models: the identification of the military enemies as chaotic forces (v. 5), and the personification of Sheol and Death as hunters catching their prey (v. 6). There is also a significant overlap between these two models: if the battle is seen as a hunt, the military enemies can be seen as the traps and nets of the hunters (v. 6); since the hunters, Sheol and Death, are associated with the realms of chaotic waters, the psalmist can also paint the king's military enemies in the colours of these cosmic forces—waves and torrents (v. 5). The pictures therefore allow the reader to 'see' the enemies 'as' waves of death coming over his head and 'as' torrents of destruction assailing and overwhelming him. The sheer magnitude of the enemy forces storming through the land, devastating everything in their path, overwhelm and submerge the king, and he is trapped on all sides.

All four verses make clear that the psalmist has no hope of escape without the help of one who is stronger, YHWH, who hears his cries for help and comes to his aid. The domain of 'strength', with which the psalm began, continues to be filled in. These depictions of distress will not be developed or 'answered' directly until vv. 17–20, which present a picture of divine rescue from 'mighty waters' and of being led out to a broad place. However, portraying the king's distress in such stark and cosmic colours sets the scene for the theophany in the next stanza.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRANSLATION AND EXEGESIS OF PSALM 18.8–20

YHWH has heard the psalmist's cry from the depths, and is moved to anger and action against his enemies. The theophany is framed by the disruption to the foundations of the earth caused by YHWH's angry presence in vv. 8 and 16. The quaking and shaking of the earth in v. 8 appears as "the first echo" of the psalmist's cry to YHWH in v. 7.[1] What follows is a dazzling array of images, depicting YHWH's wrath, descent and attack as the ultimate warrior-king: a terrifying, fire-breathing, storm-god warrior. Finally, in v. 16, we see a picture of the waters of the sea being swept away in a crushing defeat, just as YHWH defeats the king's enemies. In the short section that follows (vv. 17–20), we reach the culmination of the narrative of rescue and YHWH's direct response to the king's cry for help. The psalmist paints word-pictures that correspond spatially to the distress of vv. 5–6 in terms of rescue as movement upwards from deep water (v. 17), and the movement from narrowness to width (v. 20). The plainer narrative style of vv. 4–7 is resumed in vv. 18–19, filling in further conceptual 'gaps' about the military attack and the identity of the king's enemies, and introducing a reflection on the reason for this divine deliverance, which will be developed in the section that follows.

The language of the theophany in Psalm 18 has been described in various ways, including "Theophanieschilderung", "theophany-metonymy" and "soteriological myth".[2] Each of these struggles to describe the slightly unusual form and content of the language that is used here. As will be seen below, in the context of the whole psalm, the theophany uses mythological imagery and concepts not only to express the psalmist's experience of YHWH's presence in battle, but also to comunicate a range of observations about YHWH, and his relationship to the king and the cosmos. The interpretation of its language therefore needs to be understood within this context. Without this framework, one can arrive at some rather

---

[1] Köckert 2001: 213.

[2] Respectively, Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 118–130 (cf. the expression "Theophanie-Metaphorik" used of Ps 97 in Hossfeld and Zenger 2000: 682); Nielsen 2010: 202; Hunter 1987: 34.

odd conclusions, for example, Nielsen's assertion that the theophany in Psalm 18 "bears the stamp of metonymical relations" between YHWH and natural phenomena.[3] She describes natural phenomena as a consequence of Yahweh's lordship over nature, in order to argue that the smoke, fire, coals, thunder, etc. in the theophany passage are not in fact metaphors (assuming a substitutionary view of metaphor, according to which individual words are isolated as 'non-literal'), but metonyms. However, her argument that darkness is a metonym is based on the false assumption that the sentence is usually read as a simple 'A is a B' metaphor of darkness describing Yahweh: "the darkness is an element that Yahweh makes use of; it cannot therefore be a metaphor for him, but indicates a metonymical relation."[4] While Nielsen is right to suggest that the theophany is not a string of metaphors, she misrepresents both the nature and function of metaphor and metonymy and ignores the significance of the theophany's mythical dimension.[5]

In Ortlund's description of theophany in Hebrew poetry, he observes the frequent conjunction of theophany with Chaoskampf motifs: "one could legitimately describe theophany in the Psalms and Prophets as the visible and direct appearance of YHWH as he defeats the powers of chaos".[6] However, this study diverges from Ortlund's position in maintaining the existence of metaphorical transference and metaphorical models within the mythical depiction of the theophany. What is distinctive about theophanic language in Ps 18, then, is that it is a mythical expression of an experience, which draws on a number of different but related metaphorical models, and contains a number of interlocking images within it, which relate to other images elsewhere in the psalm.[7] Rather than metaphors, or 'analogical word-pictures', one might therefore refer to the imagery as '*mythical* word-pictures'.

---

[3] Nielsen 2010: 204.

[4] Nielsen 2010: 203.

[5] Ortlund (2010: 1–94) makes a convincing case for rejecting metaphorical interpretations of theophanic imagery in favour of mythical ones.

[6] Ortlund 2010: 3.

[7] This point is developed further in Chapter 9.

Words and Pictures in Verses 8–16

Verse 8

Then the earth pitched and rolled	וַתִּגְעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ
and the foundations of the mountains[8] *trembled*	וּמוֹסְדֵי הָרִים יִרְגָּזוּ וַיִּתְגָּעֲשׁוּ
and quaked	
because his anger blazed	כִּי־חָרָה לוֹ

This dramatic description sets a cosmic backdrop for the description of YHWH's appearance and advent, and provides the reason or cause of YHWH's manifestation, namely, his anger at the enemies who have caused the king's distress. The precise meaning of געש is unclear.[9] It describes people shaking and staggering as a result of YHWH's judgment (Jer 25.16; Job 34.20),[10] as well as surging waters (the enemy forces in Jer 5.22; 46.7, 8). Such 'water-language' creates a semantic shock: the solid earth itself reels at the force of YHWH's anger, bearing witness to YHWH's dominion over creation and warning of impending judgement. The verb is restated and intensified in the second stich: not just the earth but the earth's very foundations are convulsing and unstable like the sea (cf. Isa 24.18).[11] Conceptual parallels are found in the descriptions of the earthquake in Amos 8.8 and 9.5 as rising and falling like the Nile. The term רעש frequently describes the quaking of nature (usually the earth) at YHWH's presence or anger (e.g. Judg 5.4; Ps 68.8, 77.19; Nah 1.5). It also appears strikingly in Ps 60.4, describing the land quaking as a result of military defeat. The assonance and alliteration here emphasize the sound and crashing motion of the earth.[12]

The use of רגז in this verse intensifies the sense of nature's disturbance. Not only is the earth reeling but even what lies beneath the earth is subject to forceful shaking and trembling in fear at YHWH's wrath. Mountains

---

[8] 2 Sam 22.8 has מוסדי השמים 'foundations of the heavens' creating an alternative pairing of earth/heaven rather than earth/what lies beneath it. The effect is similar, although the Ps 18 version seems more congruent with the description of the psalmist's distress, caught in the cords of Sheol.

[9] KBL (200a) notes Mid. Heb. "to rumble?, bubble up, belch" and cognates in Arab., Eth., Tigr., and Akk. 'belch', in contrast to LXX σαλεύω shake and Vg. *commoveo*—stir up, excite, agitate. Ges[18] (226) suggests "schwanken" (cf. Seybold 1996: 76; Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 123).

[10] Cf. Ps 60.5.

[11] Cf. Isa 24.20 'the earth staggers like a drunkard'—with a clever twist of the metaphor it falls and will not rise again.

[12] רעש denotes both sound and movement, cf. e.g. Jer 8.16, 49.21, 50.46; Ezek 26.10.

were considered ancient (Gen 49.26; Deut 33.15; Hab 3.6), imagined to have roots (Job 28.9; Jon 2.6) and to be connected to the pillars of the earth.[13] Here, not just the mountains but the foundations of the mountains (מוסדי הרים),[14] the oldest foundations of the world, are trembling in fear.[15] It is possible that the psalmist is referring indirectly to the entrance to the underworld (cf. death and Sheol in vv. 5–6), an image that appears in v. 16. In the Ugaritic myths, Mot's dwelling was at the base of a mountain (*KTU* 1.4.VIII.1–9).

Like רעש, רגז indicates shaking in fear caused by YHWH's presence and wrath, describing both people and nature.[16] An interesting literary parallel appears in the narrative in 1 Sam 14.15, where YHWH gives Jonathan victory over the Philistines: the earth trembles (רגז), paralleling the trembling (חרד) of the raiders. Although the causal connection to YHWH's presence is not made explicit, it is clear from the whole narrative that it is a sign of YHWH's presence and aid in battle.[17]

YHWH's terrifying might and presence as a warrior in battle is attributed to his anger. כי חרה לו is a common idiomatic expression, meaning literally 'it burned to him', i.e. 'he was angry', and is used to describe both human and divine anger (usually found with ב + אף). In the Psalms, there are numerous requests for YHWH's anger to be directed against the psalmist's enemies.[18] Although the trembling of nature is frequently associated with God's anger,[19] his anger is not a consistent feature of theophanic descriptions (Judg 5.4f; Ps 77.17f). A striking parallel is found in a Babylonian hymn to the storm-god Ramman.[20]

The motif of nature trembling is common in Akkadian literature, where it frequently accompanies the appearance of war-like gods, particularly storm gods.[21] Enlil is called 'shaker of mountains' (*munarriṭ ḫuršani*) and 'shaker of heavens' (*munarriṭ ša[m]e*), cf. Ps 29.8.[22] Such descriptions of the earth shaking and trembling are often explained simply as 'mythological

---

[13] Keel 1978: 57, fig. 57.

[14] Cf. מוסדי הארץ (e.g. Ps 82.5; Prov 8.29). It occurs in parallel with שאול תחתית 'deepest Sheol' (Deut 32.22).

[15] Cf. e.g. Judg 5.4; Ps 97.5.

[16] E.g. Isa 5.25; Amos 8.8; Ps 77.17.

[17] רגז is one of several verbs used in battle contexts to describe fear and trembling in both humans and nature (cf. מסס e.g. Deut 1.28; מוג e.g. Josh 2.9).

[18] E.g. Pss 7.6; 69.25; 79.6.

[19] E.g. Nah 1.5f.; Hab 3.8.

[20] Jastrow 1898: 309.

[21] See Loewenstamm 1980.

[22] Tallqvist 1938: 143, 166, 174.

motifs', or as a characteristic feature of storm-deities, and are rarely untangled or unpacked. This is the first of a number of interlocking, bi-directional word-pictures in Psalm 18's theophany that are rooted in a fusion of ancient Near Eastern conceptions of storm and battle, resulting in the portrayal of YHWH as the ultimate warrior-king and storm deity.[23]

In southern Mesopotamia people lived at the mercy of the weather, their agricultural success and economic stability affected by violent storm-winds, irregular flash-flooding, and fierce lightning and thunder-storms. The underlying conceptualisation of the storm was understandably one of attack, or war. As a generative metaphorical model, or root metaphor, 'storm as a battle' is incredibly powerful as it is rich in shared associations that create space for a number of bi-directional word-pictures. Both storm and flood, like a military attack, overwhelm the land with tremendous and terrifying force. Both have the capacity to destroy, to devastate, and to wipe out whatever lies in their path (cf. the Gilgamesh Epic XI.121, 129).[24]

With the personification of elements of the storm, the figure of the storm-god emerges, identified as the cause of the terrifying destruction by flood and storm. This involves the metaphorisation of natural phenomena such as rain, clouds, winds, etc. as the storm-god's weapons and opens a channel for further metaphorical transference between the idea of 'storm-god' and 'warrior'. Just as the storm-god is described in terms of a human warrior with his weapons of nature, so the warrior (human or divine) can be described in terms of the storm-god. Shalmaneser III writes of one conquest, 'I slew their warriors with the sword, descending upon them like Adad when he makes a rainstorm pour down'.[25] Thus, the warrior-king's victory can be compared to the destruction caused by a deluge, his battle-cry to a clap of thunder, his arrows to lightning, his chariot to a storm-cloud, and his breath or command to a storm-wind (cf. the Sumerian hymn 'Ishkur and the Destruction of the Rebellious Land').[26]

The connection between storm and battle operates on both a visual and aural level, which is evident throughout the theophany. An army approaching can look like a black storm-cloud approaching; arrows darting on all sides can have the terrifying appearance of lightning; the sound

---

[23] 'Bi-directional' means that in a metaphor 'X is a Y', not only does Y help us to see new things about X, but X also sheds new light on Y.

[24] Cf. Tsumura 2005: 184–187. A contemporary use of this metaphorical model can be seen in the operation name of the Persian Gulf War, 'Desert Storm' (Kendrick 1994: 64).

[25] *ANET* 277; cf. *ANET* 291.

[26] *ANET* 578.

of chariots or horses at speed must indeed sound like thunder, and cause the earth to shake under foot. Thus the explanation of the earth trembling should not simply stop at the conceptual arena of the 'storm-god', as it resonates with the physical experience of actual battles (cf. Isa 14.16).[27]

Verse 9

Smoke rose from his nostrils	עָלָה עָשָׁן בְּאַפּוֹ
and fire from his mouth consuming;	וְאֵשׁ־מִפִּיו תֹּאכֵל
coals burned hot from his presence	גֶּחָלִים בָּעֲרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ

The conventional metaphorical expression of anger from the previous verse is rekindled here by playing with the symbols of smoke and fire.[28] The description focuses not on the impact of his anger on nature but on YHWH's appearance and the intensity of his anger. עשן, often signifying God's presence (e.g. Gen 15.17; Isa 4.5, 6.4) or presented as an effect of God's advent (e.g. Ps 104.32, cf. Ps 144.5), is found frequently in the context of YHWH's judgement and is used particularly as a symbol of destruction.[29] Parallels are often drawn between the smoke 'going up' (עלה) in Ps 18.9 and Exod 19.18. However, here it is 'from' God's nostrils (באפו) rather than from a mountain and it is the effect not of his advent but of his anger. The difference is a subtle one, but suggests that we should be cautious about drawing a strong connection with Exod 19.18.

There is some interchange between the prepositions ב and מן elsewhere in the HB and a couple of parallels in Ugaritic literature which support the translation 'from' in this case (e.g. KTU 1.2.IV.6, cf. KTU 1.18.25, 26).[30] The verb עלה expresses the idea of motion 'away from', which also governs the parallel image of fire coming from YHWH's mouth, associated elsewhere with judgement and punishment (e.g. Isa 1.20; 11.4). Although this is the only passage in which consuming fire explicitly comes from YHWH's mouth (cf. Ps 50.2 לפניו), there are conceptual parallels (cf. Ps 29.7; Isa 30.27, 33), and the word of YHWH is sometimes described as fire (e.g. Jer 5.14). Here the fire conveys the intensity and force of YHWH's

---

[27] Loewenstamm 1980: 181–3.

[28] Cf. Num 11.1 ויחר אפו is followed by a description of the fire of the Lord burning (בער) against the people and consuming (אכל) parts of the camp (cf. Isa 63.19–64.1).

[29] E.g. Josh 8.20, 21; Isa 14.31; 34.10; Nah 2.14.

[30] Cf. Sarna 1959, cit. in Chisholm 1983: 164. In Ugaritic, the preposition '*b*' can indicate the point of departure if motion 'away from' is expressed by the verb (Pardee 1976).

anger and the fearfulness of his presence. The image also anticipates the subsequent destruction which such 'fiery anger' will cause in v. 16.

אכל is used figuratively with the meaning 'to destroy/consume' numerous times in the HB, often describing Israel or her enemies 'devouring' each other and their land in military defeats (e.g. Deut 7.16). In Deut 9.3 YHWH promises help in defeating the Anakim by going before them as אש אכלה, a motif which is developed in the prophetic literature (e.g. Isa 30.30; Amos 1.4). בער elsewhere describes the burning of YHWH's wrath and his punishment with fire (e.g. Jer 4.4). The intensity of the fire, depicting YHWH's anger, is enough to set coals ablaze (גחלים). The repetition of גחלים in v. 13 (with אש), could suggest that YHWH is igniting the coals here in order to use them as weapons (cf. Ps 11.6). An interesting conceptual parallel to the idea of YHWH kindling coals and sending lightning (Ps 18. 9, cf. v. 15) can be seen in KTU 1.3.IV.25–27 where Anat challenges Baal to put his thunderbolt in the sky and kindle his flash (*qrn*).

The characteristic of 'fieriness' is shared between gods, kings and monsters, and is found across a range of ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography, with underlying metaphorical associations of power, anger, destruction and terror.[31] In the 'Bulletin Text', Ramses II is described as raging against his foes: 'he burnt up every foreign land with his hot breath . . . his might flared like fire against them'.[32] Similarly, the goddess Ishtar is called a 'firebrand, which is kindled against the enemy'.[33] The fearful portrayal of Leviathan in Job 41 with its three symbols of smoke, fire and coals may also be compared here,[34] which comes in the context of its terrifying and awesome appearance and the incomparability of its power (cf. the description of the monster *Ḫuwawa* in the Gilgamesh Epic).[35]

The descriptions of fire-breathing warriors and the destruction that follows their path no doubt emerged from the experience of fires caused by military raids (cf. e.g. Josh 8.8, 19; 11.11, etc).[36] Assyrian kings frequently used the phrase 'I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire' to describe their conquests, and this is used freely alongside storm imagery.[37] Fire and storm are frequently mentioned alongside each other in the Psalms

---

[31] E.g. *ANET* 62; KTU 1.2.I.32; K 2401 (tr. Parpola 1997: 24).
[32] Kitchen 1996: 17 (line 91–92); cf. Grayson 1996: 86; *CoS* II: 14–15.
[33] *ANET* 384; cf. ibid. 577.
[34] Cf. Bergman, Krecher, and Hamp 1974: 425; Newsom 1996: 624.
[35] *ANET* 78–9.
[36] Cf. Assyrian reliefs in Yadin 1963: 392–3; cf. *ARAB* I: 226, 228, 231, etc. See also Miller 1965: 260, n. 20.
[37] *ARAB* 2: 124, 225; cf. Grayson 1976: 85–6.

and prophetic literature, either with reference to fire as lightning or in descriptions of devouring fire as an integral part of the portrayal of the divine warrior and judge.[38] The pictures of fire, smoke and coals here are frequently regarded as 'intruders' into the description of YHWH as a storm-god: Kraus writes of the 'impenetrable problem' of the 'telescoping' of 'two blocks of images' in theophanic descriptions.[39] However, it is clear from both biblical and other ancient Near Eastern texts that there was a natural fusion of divine warrior and storm-god images in battle contexts.

Attempts to forge a link between the description of YHWH's presence here and YHWH's revelation at Mount Sinai (Exod 19.18) are understandable, since the description and repetition of glowing coals can understandably evoke a mental picture of a volcano. However, the context and purpose of YHWH's 'mountain-top appearances' in the Exodus narrative should make us hesitate before naming Ps 18.9 as an intentional allusion to Sinai (cf. also Exod 24.17).[40] What the two descriptions share is the awe-full presence of YHWH, which is the point of overlap between epiphanies and theophanies.[41] It is the fear and awe inspired by YHWH's presence in self-revelation or in deliverance that explain the shared use of images of the earth trembling, thunder, clouds, darkness, smoke, and coals, rather than a deliberate suggestion of one by the other.[42] However, what distinguishes them in this context is YHWH's rage, which is emphatically *not* a feature of the Sinai epiphanies in Exodus 19 and 24.

Verse 10

And he unfurled the heavens and came down	וַיֵּט שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרַד
and dark storm clouds were under his feet	וַעֲרָפֶל תַּחַת רַגְלָיו

We now reach the dramatic description of YHWH's descent and his terrifying appearance in cloud and darkness. In response to the psalmist's

---

[38] E.g. Isa 29.6, cf. Pss 29.7; 50.3; 97.2–4; 104.4.

[39] Kraus 1993: 261. Cross (1973: 167) seems to be alone in regarding fire as consistent with storm-god imagery.

[40] A strong connection between Sinai and theophanic imagery is argued by Weiser (1950), Jeremias (1965) and Niehaus (1995), and opposed by Westermann (1961), Loewenstamm (1980) and Cross (1973).

[41] 'Epiphany' refers here to an appearance of Yahweh with the purpose of self-revelation, in contrast to 'theophany' which refers to an appearance of YHWH to help/deliver his people, or in this case, the king. (The uses of these terms are by no means consistent, e.g. Westermann 1961: 70.)

[42] Cf. e.g. Ps 50.2–4; 68.2–5.

cry, YHWH comes down from the heights of heaven to rescue him. The precise meaning of the first word-picture here is not clear. The verb נטה is often rendered 'bow down' or 'bend', such as bending one's shoulder to a burden (Gen 49.15).[43] It is difficult at first to imagine what it might 'look like' for the heavens to be bowed down. Cross and Freedman suggest a meaning akin to the 'spreading out' of a tent (e.g. Gen 12.8), appealing to the use of נטה with שמים in a creation context (e.g. Ps 104.2).[44] In Psalm 18 they suggest that it means 'to spread apart, open (as curtains)', supporting their argument with Isa 63.19: 'O, that you would tear (קרע) the heavens and come down'. It seems more likely, however, that קרע in Isa 63.19 rather than being synonymous with נטה in Ps 18.10, is actually hyperbole—an intensification of the word-picture, i.e. 'don't just roll out the heavens, *tear them open*, come quickly!' קרע also has associations with violent and sudden action, that נטה does not share (e.g. Exod 28.32).

The translation here follows Houtman's vivid picture of YHWH 'rolling out' or 'unfurling' the clouds, understanding נטה as 'bow down' or 'incline', i.e. spreading the heavens downwards for his descent.[45] If the heavens were thought of as a dome, one can imagine the heavenly sphere sinking/bowing down under the weight of the stormy rain-clouds, described in v. 12. In the preceding psalm, נטה occurs in a plea for God to 'incline' his ear, to hear a prayer (Ps 17.6), and the verb is also used in the common expression of YHWH's 'outstretched arm' (זרוע נטויה) in battle contexts and in descriptions of rescue.[46] These two images provide a point of comparison: here YHWH is not merely inclining his ear or extending his arm to help, but actually coming down 'in person', bowing the heavens to get there.

ירד often conveys a sense of the distance travelled from heaven to earth (Mic 1.3; Isa 63.19, cf. Prov 30.4): 'which only YHWH is able to transcend' (cf. Ps 18.7).[47] The picture of YHWH coming down from the heavens (v. 10) differs from other theophanic descriptions where YHWH marches forth with his heavenly armies from a particular geographical location (with יצא, בא, or צעד), e.g. from Sinai or Seir (Judg 5.4; Deut 33.2). Both נטה

[43] Cf. also 2 Kgs 19.16; Ps 17.6, cf. Vg. 4 Esr 3.18 *et inclinasti caelos et statuisti terram* . . .

[44] Cross and Freedman 1953: 24 n. 23 (supported by Dahood 1966, and Schmuttermayr 1971).

[45] Cf. 1 Kgs 18.44f.

[46] E.g. Exod 6.6.

[47] Mayer 1990: 322.

and ירד emphasize how YHWH's descent bridges the gulf between heaven and earth.[48]

ערפל is usually translated by 'thick darkness' or 'dark rain clouds', and is related semantically to ענן[49] and חשך.[50] Here the cloud is under YHWH's feet (cf. Nah 1.3), as YHWH's 'vehicle', and paints the picture of an approaching storm.[51] Dense cloud is frequently used in descriptions of YHWH (e.g. Ps 97.2; Ezek 1.4; Nah 1.3) and can be identified with depictions of the storm-god figure. In Ps 68, YHWH is praised as the one who rides across the heavens (v. 34, cf. Deut 33.26), and is described elsewhere as riding a swift cloud to fight his enemies (Isa 19.1).

Descriptions of YHWH as a 'cloud-rider' are often explained as a polemical device,[52] 'renaming' YHWH with an epithet of Baal (Ug. *rkb ʿrpt* 'cloud rider', e.g. KTU 1.19.I.43–4).[53] However, this was not a formulaic expression reserved solely for Baal: Adad was also known as *rākib ūmi* 'rider of the great storm' and Ishkur as *rākib ūmu rabbutu* rider of the great whirlwind'.[54] It seems that riding on clouds (or winds or storm 'chariots') was a common way of referring to ancient Near Eastern storm / warrior-deities although they were not bound to one particular 'vehicle' (cf. Ps 68.5). The image of the heavens being bowed down towards the earth is supplemented in v. 12 by a picture of dense clouds forming YHWH's canopy and shelter.

Verse 11

He mounted a cherub and soared	וַיִּרְכַּב עַל־כְּרוּב וַיָּעׇף
and swooped down on the wings of the wind	וַיֵּדֶא[55] עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ

Here the psalmist paints two vivid and majestic pictures of YHWH's descent, introducing a supernatural being (כרוב) into the theophany account,

---

48 Scholars (e.g. Kraus 1993: 260) who focus on the potential Sinai allusions in Ps 18 also compare the use of ירד (e.g. Exod 19.11, 18, 20; 34.5) As mentioned earlier, Exod 19 describes an epiphany rather than a theophany: YHWH comes down to reveal himself to the people rather than to fight for them (cf. Exod 3.8).

49 E.g. Deut 4.11.

50 E.g. Isa 60.2.

51 Cf. representations of God's presence on Mt Sinai / Horeb (Exod 20.21; Deut 4.11, 5.22) and in the temple (1 Kgs 8.12).

52 E.g. Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 162, 164.

53 Cf. KTU 1.2.IV.8.

54 Tallqvist 1938: 175, 248.

55 2 Sam 22 reads וירא 'and he was seen', probably a scribal error (since YHWH is concealed from sight in v. 12), opting for a more common verb (ראה).

which is otherwise dominated by fire and storm phenomena. This is the only word-picture in the HB of YHWH riding on a cherub, provoking several attempts to explain it away. These are based on different interpretations of either רכב + על, or the poetic structure of the verse, which could suggest that כרוב is a personification of the wind or the storm-clouds.[56] However, there are strong reasons for preserving the image of YHWH riding a single cherub, not least because וירכב על-כרוב is a clever root-play with alliteration, which would not work with the pl. כרובים.[57]

The common use of רכב + על indicates riding on an animal's back.[58] W. B. Barrick argues convincingly that 'superimpositionality' is 'a basic element of the semantic content of the word', and lists a number of examples where רכב + על has the vertical connotation 'mount' followed by a horizontal motion.[59] Mowinckel's argument that רכב here refers to YHWH driving a chariot rests on a classic case of substitutionary metaphor theory: that the meaning of רכב in a military context is always 'drive' (a chariot), and should be rejected.[60] In Psalm 18 he therefore gives a reductionist interpretation of the word-picture as a cultic expression of YHWH on his chariot.[61] While he is right to see the potential conceptual spaces created by this word-picture (particularly the associations of a chariot or throne), he ignores some of the key words in the picture and squashes the word-picture's 'surplus' meaning (cf. Isa 19.1).

There is considerable evidence from a range of Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Syro-Palestinian art and literature, of deities in a military context riding on animals, mythological creatures, chariots, wind and clouds, which confirm the interpretation of YHWH riding a cherub.[62] Since all of the natural phenomena were at the storm god's disposal, descriptions of these understandably overlap with imagery of chariots and harnessed animals. The Sumerian hymn to Ishkur reads: 'lord who rides the storm . . . who

---

[56] E.g. Greenberg 1983: 54; Kuntz 1983: 17.

[57] Cf. Watson 1984: 240.

[58] These include camel (Gen 24.61; 1 Sam 30.17), donkey (Exod 4.20; Judg 10.4; 12.14; Zech 9.9), mule (2 Sam 18.9; 1 Kgs 1.33, 38, 44) and horse (2 Kgs 18.23; Est 6.8, 9, etc).

[59] E.g. 1 Kgs 13.13–14 (cf. Barrick 1982: 502).

[60] Mowinckel 1962b: 285. He makes the same case for Deut 33.26; Isa 19.1; Hab 3.8; and Ps 68.5, 34.

[61] Mowinckel 1962b: 297.

[62] *Contra* Mowinckel 1962b: 295. E.g. a unique Hebrew name seal (7th/8th century?) with a winged, bearded god on a winged sphinx / human-headed bull with two (or possibly four) wings, in Sass and Uehlinger 1993: 233 fig. 143. Cf. KTU 1.86.6; 1.4.IV.14ff; *ANEP* 221, 332, no. 689. See also Cornelius 2004: 40–44.

rides the great lion . . . fill up the winds before you . . . Let the seven winds be harnessed for you like a team'.[63]

כרוב is described in several texts as a heavenly being, associated with the divine presence, and is ascribed an apotropaic function—that of safeguarding the boundary between humanity and divinity (cf. e.g. Gen 3.24; Exod 25.20; 1 Kgs 8.7; Ezek 28.14): 'In each case, the cherubim are boundary markers and guardians of what is sacred.'[64] Since the theophany in Psalm 18 is concerned with YHWH crossing this boundary from heaven to earth, it seems quite fitting that a cherub should be YHWH's vehicle.[65] The unique (and perhaps uncomfortably anthropomorphic) image of YHWH riding on a single cherub, as well as the translation of the pl. 'cherubim' in the LXX and Tg,[66] have led some scholars to question the originality and meaning of the sg. כרוב (cf. Ezek 28.14).[67] A. Wood observes that the parallelism here is not between 'cherub' and 'wings' but 'cherub' and the 'wind'.[68] It is more likely that the translators were attempting to modify the anthropomorphic image of YHWH mounting or riding a cherub.[69] The verse thus presents two complementary word-pictures, which should not be assimilated.

עוף describes the flight of a variety of winged creatures,[70] and its figurative usage confirms the idea of YHWH flying on the cherub in Psalm 18. Metaphors in the image-field describe armies 'swooping down' (עוף) onto the backs of enemies (Isa 11.14), and horsemen 'flying (עוף) like an eagle, ready to devour' (Hab 1.8). A number of literary and iconographical depictions from the ancient Near East support the association of a storm and

---

[63] *ANET* 578. Cf. Lambert and Millard 1969: 122–123.

[64] Wood 2008: 61.

[65] Cf. Adam 2001: 65.

[66] The Vg. strangely gives the pl. in 2 Sam 22.11 but not in Ps 18.11.

[67] Cross and Freedman (1953: 24) and Geller (1979: 172) regard the pl. as original, on the basis of the Versions, while Stuart (1976: 184) argues more strongly for the pl. on the basis of parallelism and common usage.

[68] In any case, asymmetrical grammar in a bicolon would not be a reason for textual emendation (Wood 2008: 87).

[69] Cf. Tg. ואתגלי בגבורתיה על כרובין קלילין (Wood 2008: 87). Wood also rejects comparisons with Ezekiel's vision in ch. 1 of winged creatures and the divine voice as anachronistic (ibid. 94).

[70] Deut 4.17; Isa 6.2; 14.29; Nah 3.16, cf. Ps 91.5.

storm-god with a winged creature,[71] and testify to the flight of predatory birds as a conventional analogy for military attack.[72]

דאה carries semantic associations of judgment and military defeat and is used figuratively of YHWH bringing a nation against Israel, swooping down like an eagle (upon its prey), with the intention to attack and destroy (Deut 28.49 cf. Hos 4.19; Jer 48.40). The cognate הדאה is listed amongst other birds of prey, suggesting a swooping, predatory bird (Lev 11.14). While some translations grasp the connotation of speed ('he came swiftly' *ESV*, *RSV*, *NRSV*), the predatory intention of YHWH's flight is often missed ('he soared' *ASV*, *NIV*), hence the translation 'swooped down' given above.[73]

The expression על־כנפי־רוח is also found in Ps 104.3 with הלך in a hymn of praise, along with a picture of YHWH making dark clouds (עב) his chariot. While it is possible to interpret the cherub as a personification of cloud or wind on the basis of this verse (cf. Isa 66.15), the two images should not be treated synonymously.[74] The use of רוח here suggests a storm wind,[75] and the description of YHWH swooping down on the wings of the wind thus connects the picture of the 'onrushing storm'[76] with the symbol of a winged creature advancing on its prey, ready to strike.

Verse 12

He made darkness his cover around him	יָשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ סִתְרוֹ[77] סְבִיבוֹתָיו
his canopy dense clouds, dark with water[78]	סֻכָּתוֹ חֶשְׁכַת־מַיִם עָבֵי שְׁחָקִים
(*his canopy dense clouds*	2 Sam 22 סֻכּוֹת חַשְׁרַת־מָיִם
a strainer of water	(שְׁחָקִים עָבִים

[71] Grayson 1996: 210, §106; cf. the god Zu, a bird of prey named *Im-dugud* ('mighty wind') whose roar was thunder (Weinfeld 1973: 423; Green 2003: 25). See also Keel 1978: 207, fig. 285; 215–216, fig. 295.

[72] E.g. Kitchen 1996: 10, line 216; cf. ibid. 12, line 280; *ANET* 233, 245.

[73] Cf. Kuntz 1983: 5; Keel 1978: 215.

[74] Cf. Wood 2008: 91.

[75] Cf. רוח with ברק (Ps 135.7; Jer 10.13=51.16), with עב (1 Kgs 18.45), and the construct pair רוח סערה 'storm wind' (Ezek 1.4; 13.11, 13; Ps 107.25; 148.8).

[76] Dommershausen 1995: 230.

[77] Omitted in 2 Sam 22.12.

[78] This reading follows BHS in dividing the verse before סכתו, against the Masoretic punctuation, although there is support for the MT in 4QPs^{c}. The description סביבותיו can be understood to belong to either סתר or סכה or to both, depending on the punctuation of the verse. It seems more likely that, as with the previous verse, there are two slightly different pictures being painted here (cf. Wood 2008: 106–7).

The psalmist continues the description of YHWH's descent, focussing now on the mysterious nature of YHWH's presence in the storm: his concealment in dark clouds. The clouds that aided his descent in v. 10 (ערפל) now surround him like a moving shield and shelter. YHWH's presence is often associated with clouds, particularly thick, dark clouds.[79] Darkness (חשך), although associated with evil and death (Isa 5.20; 1 Sam 2.9), is not a threatening force to YHWH (Ps 139.12).[80] It is established by him (Ps 104.20) and is used both as a dwelling (1 Kgs 8.12) and as a weapon against Israel's enemies (Exod 10.21–2).[81] An interesting military parallel can be found in Isa 5.30 where darkness, distress and dark clouds are signs of foreign invasion. Here, the darkness is described as YHWH's סתר.[82]

סתר often denotes a hiding-place or refuge for a human or animal (1 Sam 19.2; Job 40.21), and is semantically related to the terms of refuge at the beginning of the psalm.[83] The picture here is mysterious and threatening: סביבותיו qualifies the nature of YHWH's covering, leaving the reader in no doubt that YHWH was completely concealed. There is a striking contrast between the presentation of the psalmist in v. 6—surrounded by threatening and destructive forces (סבב qal), a picture of utter helplessness, and YHWH here—mysteriously shrouded (סבב) in darkness and clouds, a picture of supreme power. סכה is predominantly used of a temporary dwelling or canopy that provides shade, shelter and protection.[84] In contrast to more positive images of YHWH's canopy, associated with divine protective presence and the provision of refuge (Isa 4.6; Ps 31.21), the word-picture in this context is menacing. YHWH's סכה is a mass of dense, dark, watery storm-clouds, a foreboding picture of the divine descent for battle.[85]

The unique expression חשכת מים is usually understood to qualify עבי שחקים, describing the clouds as 'watery darkness' or 'dark with water' (*NRSV*). 2 Sam 22.12 has instead the *hapax legomenon* חשרת מים which may be preferred as the *lectio difficilior*. The root חשׂר most likely means

---

79 E.g. Exod 19.16; Deut 4.11; 1 Kgs 8.12.

80 Cf. Gen 1.18; Exod 10.21–3; Josh 24.7; Isa 45.7; Ps 74.16). In Ugarit Mot had power over darkness because of its associations with death (cf. KTU 1.4.VII.54, 55).

81 Cf. Joel 2.1–2; Amos 5.18, 20; Zeph 1.15.

82 Cf. Job 22.13–14, a parody (through imitation and subversion) of a well-known image, cf. also Lam 3.43–4.

83 E.g. Pss 31.21; 32.7; 61.5; 91.1; 119.114, cf. אענך בסתר רעם in Ps 81.8.

84 E.g. 2 Sam 11.11; 1 Kgs 20.12; Job 38.40; Jon 4.5.

85 Job 36.29–30 picks up this imagery and weaves it with YHWH's acts of creation.

'sieve'.[86] Cross fills in the word-picture according to the latter root, describing the clouds as 'sieve-like containers from which the water drops' (Vg. *cribrans* 'sifting'; cf. also Prov 3.20).[87] The closest cognates to support this are Mid. Heb. חשׁר 'sieben, ausstreuen', and JAram. חֲשַׁר (Ges[18] 409), cf. Ug *ḫṯr* 'sieve' (although the meaning of *ḫṯr* remains unclear (*DULAT* 416, cf. KTU 1.6.II.32).

עב commonly denotes 'cloud', often a dense rain-cloud. It is associated elsewhere with darkness (e.g. 1 Kgs 18.45) and found frequently in theophanic texts. The clouds 'pour' with water at YHWH's approach (Judg 5.4; Ps 77.18), and act as YHWH's vehicle (Isa 19.1; Ps 104.3). The pl. form of שחק belongs exclusively to poetic texts in the HB. Its root שחק 'to pulverize' suggests a translation of 'dust' or 'wispy cloud', although a number of texts (several with theophanic motifs) seem to indicate a more general usage of the pl. to mean 'skies' or 'heaven', which is appealing in the light of the description of cloud in v. 10.[88]

A striking conceptual parallel to the image of YHWH approaching in dense clouds is found in the account of Sennacherib's campaign against Elam, where he describes the approaching enemy: 'like a mighty storm with (its) masses of dense (*lit*. pregnant) clouds, they drew up in battle array before me'.[89] In Psalm 18, however, the *deus revelatus* is simultaneously the *deus absconditus*, a feature which is highlighted particularly well by storm imagery of darkness and light, thunder and lightning.[90] This verse adds to an already complex picture of YHWH's descent the further dimension of YHWH's hidden-ness in the stormy images of rain clouds and darkness covering him on all sides. Whereas the previous verse was loaded with verbs drawing attention to YHWH's action (of swooping and swift flight), this one is overflowing with nouns, emphasizing the visual

---

[86] The alternative suggestion for the root חשׁר 'gather'/'collect' (e.g. Klein 1987: 236, cf. *NRSV*) has been widely rejected (e.g. *HALOT* 1, 363 and *DCH,* 333). Weinfeld (1973: 421–6) makes an interesting case for the influence of depictions of YHWH as 'rider' and 'gatherer' of the clouds on descriptions of Zeus, but the potential cognates in relation to our verse are too different—Akk. *kaṣāru* 'collect', is probably related to Heb. קצר 'reap' (*AHw* 456), and Ug *'sr* (*DULAT* 114) to Heb אסר.

[87] Cross 1953: 25, n. 33; cf. Feigin's suggested reading חשׁר שׁמים "the heavenly sieve", from which YHWH shoots his arrows and lightning (Feigin 1950: 40–3). The textual difficulties with עבר in v. 13 render such an interpretation unlikely in Ps 18 and impossible in 2 Sam 22, which omits עבר.

[88] Cf. Deut 33.26; Isa 45.8; Pss 68.35; 77.18. A number of these occurrences are in parallel with שׁמים (cf. Dan 7.13 ענני שׁמיא). See Houtman (1993: 24), who suggests that שׁחקים like שׁמים is probably a *pluralis amplitudinis*.

[89] *ARAB* 2: 126.

[90] Cf. Kuntz 1983: 17.

dimension of the theophany, which is paradoxically focussed here on darkness and mystery. It also provides an interesting parallel to the king's hiding-place, which is YHWH (vv. 2–3).

Verse 13

Out of the brightness before him	מִנֹּגַהּ נֶגְדּוֹ
his clouds blazed forth with hail and fiery coals[91]	עָבְיו עָבְרוּ בָּרָד וְגַחֲלֵי־אֵשׁ
Out of the brightness before him	2 Sam 22 מִנֹּגַהּ נֶגְדּוֹ
blazed coals of fire	בָּעֲרוּ גַחֲלֵי־אֵשׁ

The darkness emphasized in the previous verse is now juxtaposed with the light and brightness of YHWH's flaming presence. The motif of YHWH's fiery anger (v. 9) is resumed and developed—the hot coals are his deadly weapons. It provides a transition in the theophany, shifting the focus from YHWH's angry appearance and descent (vv. 9–12) to YHWH's actions in the storm—through thunder, lightning and storm winds (vv. 14–16).

נגה often occurs in association with YHWH's presence and glory, denoting light—particularly brightness.[92] The collocation of נגה with the preposition נגד in this verse may at first seem strange, until one recalls the picture presented in v. 9 of devouring fire coming from YHWH's mouth. In a lament to the Sumerian war-goddess Ishtar there is a similar conception of burning light and its destructive power. The poet appeals to her, "O brilliant one, torch of heaven and earth, light of all peoples . . . which brings about the destruction of the furious".[93] In Psalm 18, as elsewhere, the root נגה is associated with fire (cf. Isa 4.5). The motif of the radiance of YHWH's presence is picked up again in the second half of the psalm (נגה hi., v. 29), where the psalmist praises YHWH for illuminating his darkness. The idea of light and brightness surrounding the deity or king is a common conception in the ancient Near East, and is often associated

[91] Assuming a mistaken transposition of letters from בערו to עברו. MT reads literally 'his clouds passed through hail and fiery coals', an odd construction in Hebrew both grammatically and in terms of word-order. One would expect עבר with ב if the sense was 'hail and coals passed through his clouds'. BHS suggests following 2 Sam 22. Chisholm's solution "From the brightness before him his clouds emerged, along with hail and coals of fire" provides an inconsistent picture and should be rejected (Chisholm 1983: 113). Seybold's translation (1996: 76) "Aus dem Glanz seiner Wolken, vor ihm, gingen hervor Hagel und Feuerkohlen" also tries to retain עברו in Ps 18, although 'brightness of the clouds' is inconsistent with the description of dark clouds in the previous verse.

[92] E.g. Hab 3.4; Ezek 1.4.

[93] *ANET* 384.

with military power (cf. Ps 104.2). There are numerous Mesopotamian parallels, where *melammu* ('radiance') characterizes gods and kings, and inspires both awe and terror.[94]

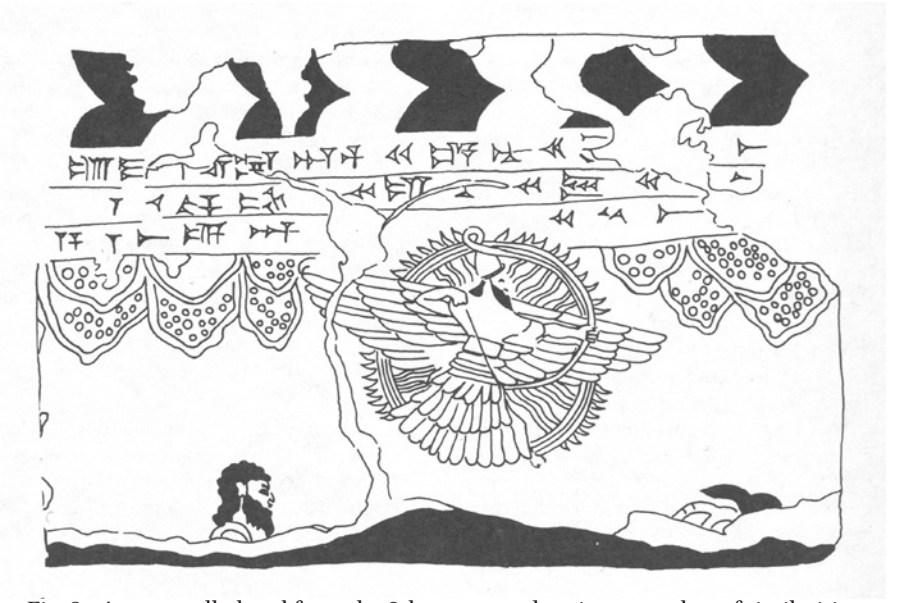

Fig. 8. An enamelled seal from the 9th century—bearing a number of similarities to the theophanic description in Psalm 18—depicts the storm god Ashur manifest in battle with wings and a fanned tail in a circle of flaming brightness, drawing his bow. One can also see rain-drops (or hail?) collecting at the bottom of the sac-like clouds which hang from the sky on either side (Keel 1978: 216, fig. 295).

ברד 'hail' is associated with fire falling on the earth (Exod 9.23, 24).[95] In Joshua's battle against the Amorites YHWH sends down huge stones (אבנים גדלות) identified as hailstones (Josh 10.11), which cause more fatal casualties than the battle itself.[96] This picture of hail-stones as a divine weapon may be derived from the use of sling-shot stones and large stones used as missiles in battle (אבני קלעים 2 Chr 26.14, 15, cf. Isa 30.30).[97] The coals of fire (גחלי־אש) lit to a blaze by YHWH's anger (v. 9), are now pictured as

[94] E.g. *ANET* 281.

[95] Cf. Pss 78.48 and 105.32.

[96] Cf. Job 38.22–3, which mentions the store-houses of hail (ברד), reserved for battle and war.

[97] Cf. also *ANET* 578.

coming forth from the clouds onto the enemy (cf. Pss 11.6; 140.11). Interestingly, the hail and coals are not deliberately being hurled at the enemy, but are pictured as simply 'spilling over' as a result of YHWH's anger. This highlights again the force and intensity of YHWH's anger and creates something of a crescendo leading towards the theophany's conclusion. Parallel images of hail and fire can be seen in the depiction of Baal rolling out (*gll*) hailstones, wind, thunder and clouds (KTU 1.13.33–34).[98] In the combination of hail and fiery coals there is a further 'kaleidoscoping' of storm and fire imagery, further conflating the two 'models' of the storm-god and devouring warrior.

The close semantic associations between fire, hail and lightning have led some scholars to interpret vv. 13 and 15 as virtually synonymous.[99] However, it is not immediately clear how the hail and flaming coals in v. 13 might resemble the arrows and lightning in v. 15. Whilst the similarities between darting arrows and lightning may be obvious, it is not so with coals. A key to this may be found in other ancient Near Eastern myths. The significance of fire and the use of fire as a weapon in the battles of the gods in Canaanite and Israelite mythology have been highlighted by Hillers and Miller.[100] Hillers draws attention to a number of parallels in Hittite art and literature (as well as Classical mythology), which are significant for the interpretation of Amos 7.4 and also of Ps 18.9, 13 and 15. In one Hittite relief, two warriors attack a serpent (thought to represent the dragon-god Illuyankas) and what appear to be 'wavy streaks' of lightning descend from above, which may represent lightning and thunderbolts.[101]

Hillers suggests that the balls at the ends of the streaks represent thunderstones. Commenting on the Ugaritic expression *abn brq* (KTU 1.3.III.26), F. C. Fensham discusses the common conception that in lightning a stone is sent down by the weather- or thunder-god and this is sometimes associated with arrow-heads.[102] If a similar idea was present in ancient Israel, this would establish a further link between YHWH's fiery rage and his storm-deity weapons. The flaming coals in Psalm 18's theophany, seen as glowing thunderbolts or lightning stones in vv. 9 and 13,

---

[98] Cf. Parpola 1997: 24.

[99] E.g. Naudé 1997: 851.

[100] Hillers 1964; Miller 1965. Amos 7.4 is a vision of conflict between YHWH and the 'deep' (תהום), in which his weapon is lightning, or supernatural fire.

[101] Hillers 1964: 223.

[102] Cf. Ugaritic *abn brq* (KTU 1.3.III. 26 *abn brq dl td' šmm*). Fensham (1959) discusses the conception that in lightning a stone is sent down by the weather- or thunder-god and this is sometimes associated with arrow-heads.

are therefore *related* to the image in v. 15, but should not be completely identified with it.[103] Here the coals are not 'shot out' or 'sent down', but are erupting from his presence.

Verse 14

Then YHWH thundered in the heavens	וַיַּרְעֵם בַּשָּׁמַיִם יְהוָה
and the Most High let out his voice	וְעֶלְיוֹן יִתֵּן קֹלוֹ
[hail and flaming hot coals][104]	[בָּרָד וְגַחֲלֵי־אֵשׁ]

The poet now adds an aural dimension to the stunning display of theophanic images. YHWH lets out his booming voice in mighty thunder. רעם often occurs in association with קול, and frequently accompanies cosmic disturbances (e.g. 1 Sam 7.10). While it can denote a loud rejoicing sound of praise to YHWH as king (e.g. Ps 96.11), it is more commonly associated with divine judgement, intervention and the terrifying noise of thunder (e.g. Isa 29.6). In Hannah's Song, YHWH's thundering in heaven (also בשמים) is associated with YHWH crushing his adversaries and giving strength to his king, exalting the horn of his anointed (1 Sam 2.10, cf. Ps 18.49, 51). YHWH is described as thundering against the Philistines (1 Sam 7.10, cf. Sir 46.17) and confusing them (המם, cf. Ps 18.15). As in Psalm 18, this can be compared to the battle cry preceding combat that signals the beginning of battle and is intended to unnerve and put the enemy to flight (cf. Judg 7.18; 1 Sam 17.20, cf. געה in v. 16).[105]

The divine title עליון is often used in a cosmic setting, where God's sovereign judgment is proclaimed (e.g. Gen 14.19).[106] Although אל עליון was originally a distinct deity, the Jebusite god of Jerusalem (cf. Gen 14.19; Deut 32.8), it is clear from the synonymous parallelism that, in this verse, YHWH and 'Elyon are completely identified. In the Psalms, 'Elyon is associated several times with rescue from enemies (e.g. 21.8; 57.3), and it is a fitting epithet for YHWH here, especially considering the predominance of spatial imagery throughout the psalm. סבשמי and עליון take us visually

---

[103] Hesiod's *Theogony* (688–700, 844–67) describes Zeus' defeat of Chaos by fire, providing a further (later) parallel from Classical literature, in which "thunder, lightning and the *glowing thunderbolt*" are named as Zeus' weapons (Hillers 1964: 224).

[104] This seems to be a case of dittography (not present in LXX Ps 17.14 or MT 2 Sam 22.14). However, since thunder is associated elsewhere with hail and flames of fire (e.g. Exod 9.18; Ps 29.7), and both thunder and fire come from YHWH's mouth (cf. v. 9), it is understandable why some MSS have retained it.

[105] Cf. *ARAB* 2: 126.

[106] Cf. Zobel 2001: 123.

back up to the heavenly heights, reminding us that YHWH is the Most High God, who lets his voice resound in the heavens (cf. Jer 25.30), shaking the heavens and the earth (v. 8, cf. Joel 4.16 [3.16]).

The expression נתן קל (cf. Ugaritic *ntn ql*) is a common idiom in theophanic motifs (Ps 46.7) and is often associated with judgment. The depiction of a deity's voice as thunder and the frequent association of the two are common in a number of ancient Near Eastern texts (cf. e.g. KTU 1.4.V.8, *CoS* III: 219). It is often suggested that Baal's two clubs used as weapons against Yam, named 'expeller' and 'driver', should be interpreted as thunder and lightning.[107] The images in Ps 18.13–16 bear a striking resemblance to this portrayal of Baal.

Verse 15

And he sent his arrows and scattered them	וַיִּשְׁלַח חִצָּיו וַיְפִיצֵם
and he shot out flashes of lightning and filled them with terror	וּבְרָקִים רָב וַיְהֻמֵּם

Anticipating the climax of the theophany is this vivid description of YHWH as a warrior, armed with arrows and lightnings. The word-pictures here need careful attention: the verbal suffixes refer more naturally to the arrows/lightnings than to the enemies, who have not been mentioned since v. 4, and yet the two verbs (פוץ and המם) are associated almost exclusively with military troops. These word-pictures play on the visual similarities between the shooting of arrows, the appearance of lightning across the sky, and the movement of enemies in flight.

שלח occurs several times with weapons, as we find here (e.g. 1 Sam 20.20, שלח in collocation with ירה 'throw'/'shoot'; Jer 25.16 with חרב 'sword', cf. the noun שלח 'missile', e.g. 2 Chr 32.5; Neh 4.11), and with ברקים 'lightnings' (Job 38.35). The expression of goal or purpose is characteristic of the root, suggesting an emphasis on the enemies rather than the arrows as the object of פוץ.[108] The context itself suggests that the arrows have an aggressive purpose here, i.e. to scatter the enemies. Arrows (חץ), like lightning, are a common feature of theophanic imagery (Hab 3.11; Ps 77.18–19) and descriptions of the storm deities in the ancient Near East. YHWH's arrows are used with deadly effect against his enemies (Num 24.8; Deut 32.42). In Egypt and Mesopotamia, arrows were the weapons

[107] The two 'weapons' occur together elsewhere, e.g. '(can) Ba'lu shout aloud in the clouds, shoot (his) lightning-bolts to the earth' (*CoS* I: 260).

[108] Hossfeld, van der Velden and Dahmen 2006: 59.

of the divine warrior, associated with military prowess and victory. Ashurbanipal declares that Ninurta, the god of warriors 'cut off the life of my enemies with his sharp arrows'.[109]

It is easy to see why opinions are divided over the interpretation of this verse. Since the image of arrows being scattered could be compared to the appearance of lightning in the sky (cf. Ps 77.18; Zech 9.14), some have interpreted the verb פוץ as referring to the arrows.[110] However, after a closer look at the words in the picture, it becomes clear that this cannot be the case. In battle accounts, פוץ frequently describes troops dispersing and scattering (e.g. 1 Sam 11.11; 2 Kgs 25.5) and is used of YHWH scattering his enemies (Ps 68.1), cf. the use of פוץ hi. to denote the scattering of seed or chaff (e.g. Isa 28.25; Jer 13.24).[111] This word-picture thus belittles the weight of the army's might and power, as they are put to flight in all directions—an impressive display of power.[112]

ברק 'lightning' is a feature of several theophanic depictions (cf. Exod 19.16; Ps 77.19). The luminosity of the lightning is emphasized in a number of places (e.g. Pss 77.19; 97.4), and this feature complements the picture of the dazzling brightness of YHWH's presence mentioned earlier (v. 13). The association of arrows with lightning was also common in ancient Near Eastern depictions of the storm god and his weapons,[113] and such imagery frequently depicts the defeat of the chaos-monster or serpent-dragon.[114]

There is some disagreement about the meaning of רבב. A number of translations prefer the rendering 'multiply' (LXX πληθύνω, reading רבב pu.). Neither the corresponding verse in 2 Sam 22.15 (Qr וברק ויהמם / ויהם) nor Ps 144.6 (וברוק ברק) use רבב. However, these variations are probably 'improvements' to the original text רב, especially as the Versions support the consonants of the MT. The translation 'shoot' (cf. Gen 49.23) certainly fits the context and provides a good parallel to שלח.

המם is often rendered 'confuse' or 'discomfit', although this does not adequately convey the force of its meaning and is probably an attempt to accommodate this odd use of the verb with lightning. Whenever YHWH is the subject of המם, the object is almost always Israel's enemies (with the exception of Deut 2.15). Although המם is not usually listed amongst

---

109 Rassam cylinder, IX, 84f. (Streck 1916: II, 79, cit. in Hoffner 1986: 120 n. 11).

110 Cf. Keel 1978: 215.

111 Job 37.11 should not be regarded as a conceptual parallel, due to verbal and contextual differences, *contra* Ringgren 2001b: 510.

112 Cf. נוס in conjunction with המם, e.g. Exod 14.24–5; Josh 10.11; Judg 4.15.

113 Keel 1978: 217, fig. 296; *ANEP* 168 no.490, 179 nos. 531–2.

114 Keel 1978: 50, fig. 44; 52, fig. 49, cf. *Enuma Elish* IV.39 (*ANET* 66); KTU 1.3.III.23, 26.

other common theophanic motifs, it is common in battle descriptions (e.g. Exod 14.24; Judg 4.15; 1 Sam 7.10).[115] There is an interesting parallel in Exod 23.27, which sets המתי in parallel with את־אימתי אשלח, declaring that YHWH will come and give them the necks of all their enemies ערף + נתן (cf. Ps 18.41). Its frequent association with verbs of destruction suggests that the terror and panic caused by YHWH is deadly.[116] The fact that this verb is theologically loaded clearly lends weight to the argument that the verbal suffix here refers to enemies rather than the lightnings. Both the arrows and lightnings are YHWH's weapons rather than the objects of his anger.

Verse 16

Then the channels of water were exposed[117]	וַיֵּרָאוּ אֲפִיקֵי מַיִם
and the foundations of the world were laid bare	וַיִּגָּלוּ מוֹסְדוֹת תֵּבֵל
at your battle-cry, O YHWH,	מִגַּעֲרָתְךָ יְהוָה
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils	מִנִּשְׁמַת רוּחַ אַפֶּךָ

The artistry of this climactic verse is masterful—verbally, visually and conceptually. The poet returns us, spatially, to the depths of the sea where the psalmist's distress began (vv. 5–6), and forms an inclusio with v. 8, where the foundations of the world were quaking at YHWH's anger. The enemies who have been put to flight by YHWH's arrows are now identified as the waters which cover the entrance to the underworld, reminiscent of the waters in which the psalmist was struggling in vv. 5–6. Thus, the final verse of the theophany clearly resounds with *Chaoskampf* motifs, while picking up the image from v. 9, of the 'angry smoke' in YHWH's nostrils, to reveal the full force of this rage: the blast (רוח אפך) of his nostrils exposes the beds of the sea.

The construct pair אפיקי מים describes deep pools or streams of water, although it is uncertain whether it refers primarily to the actual water or to the underlying channel containing and conveying the water.[118] The interpretation of the verse as two pairs of loosely synonymous lines seems

---

[115] Cf. Miller 1973: 122.

[116] E.g. תמם Deut 2.15; נכה (hi.) Josh 10.10; נגף 1 Sam 7.10; אכל Jer 51.34; אבד (pi.) Est 9.24, cf. 1 Sam 5.11.

[117] The alternative reading ים אפיקי in 2 Sam 22.16 (and other Hebrew MSS) is often preferred as the *lectio difficilior*, e.g. Cross and Freedman 1953: 26, n. 41; Craigie 2004: 170; Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 123 "die Tiefen des Meeres".

[118] Cf. Ps 42.2; Song 5.12; Joel 1.20. According to *KBL* (78b), אפיק refers to "the deepest part of a valley flowing with water".

to be most likely here: the image thus depicts the foundations of the world (under the sea) being exposed, because the water is driven back by the force of a blast from YHWH. This is supported by the gender-matched parallelism and its inversion in this verse (mm/ff/fm/fm), which is employed to emphasize the totality of the defeat (cf. e.g. Nah 2.14).[119]

The picture presented in the Versions suggests that YHWH's blast caused streams of water to 'appear', i.e. the water has been forced to go elsewhere,[120] which may have been influenced by Ps 104.7–10. However, an understanding of the 'channels' as a reference to the *source* of the sea (i.e. in the sea bed), or to water courses feeding into the sea, rather than to newly-formed pathways of water, provides a much better parallel for מוסדות תבל (cf. Ug *apq ṯmtm*).[7] The water was blasted away, so that these channels were exposed, just as the foundations of the earth at the sea bed were laid bare. Maintaining the MT Psalm 18 version holds open a visual connection between the image of channels of water and the torrents mentioned in v. 5, although it is easy to see why the text may have been amended from מים to ים or vice versa in light of the relationship between the channels and the sea.

The pairing of מוסדות with תבל hearkens back to v. 8, where the foundations of the mountains trembled in response to YHWH's anger. Now the foundations of the world established by YHWH (Ps 104.5), which are normally completely submerged by water, are laid bare. Kraus interprets Ps 18.16 as a cosmological reference to freeing the land from the sea of chaos.[121] In this context, however, the focus is rather on the force of YHWH's power and anger in driving back the sea and exposing what lies beneath it. The use of גלה (ni.) creates a vivid image of uncovering or laying open the sea-bed. Although גלה can be used in positive contexts (e.g. Gen 35.7), in this verse, the negative aspects of the verb are connected with power and humiliation (cf. Mic 1.6). A striking parallel occurs in Job 26.6, where Job describes Sheol as 'naked' before God. These figurative uses are associated with the predominant and often idiomatic use of גלה (pi.) in contexts of forbidden sexual relations, such as premarital sex, adultery, incest and rape (e.g. Exod 20.26; Lev 18.6; Deut 23.1). In the prophetic literature it is often used to describe humiliation and punishment, e.g.

---

119 Watson 1984: 127.
120 Cf. Seybold 1996: 76, "Es zeigten sich die Wasserrinnen".
121 Kraus 1993: I 260.

Isa 47.3: 'your nakedness will be uncovered (גלה ni.) and your shame revealed (ראה ni.)', cf. Jer 13.22; Ezek 23.29; Nah 3.5.

גלה thus has the potential for carrying with it a strong tone of violence and insult, engaging an underlying metaphorical model of 'military attack as sexual attack'. Having something revealed to you can set you in a position of power and dominance over it. The question levelled at Job in YHWH's response to him seems to indicate a similar idea: 'have the gates of death been revealed to you (הנגלו) or have you seen (תראה) the gates of deep darkness?' (Job 38.17). In Psalm 18 YHWH's shout leaves the entrance to Sheol unprotected and vulnerable, thus conflating the images of sea and death that we met in vv. 5–6, describing the king's enemies and the 'location' and 'sphere of power' of his distress.

גער can mean 'shout', 'rebuke', and 'roar' and is often used in connection with divine anger and displeasure.[122] It is a word that signifies a battle cry when attacking one's opponent, which connects this verse to the description of YHWH's voice in v. 14 (cf. Ps 104.7; Isa 17.13). A. A. Macintosh makes a case for rejecting the common translation 'rebuke' here, arguing that the term carries a stronger moral connotation than is warranted here, and that the expression of YHWH's passionate anger is worked out in a physical 'snorting'.[123] This interpretation is supported by the medieval Jewish commentators, e.g. Qimḥi's interpretation of גערה in Pss 18.16; 106.9; Isa 50.2 as 'the physical force behind the wind and even the wind itself'.[124] A conceptual parallel can be seen in the use of שאג to describe enemies roaring in Isa 5.29 and Ps 22.14, cf. the description of Baal roaring (*g'r*) at the messengers of Yam (KTU 1.2.I.24).

The description of what happens to the waters varies in different contexts: the water flees and is scattered (Isa 17.13; Ps 104.7), or the sea and rivers are dried up (Isa 50.2; Nah 1.4; Ps 106.9). A different dimension of the lexeme can be seen in Isa 66.15, where YHWH's גערה is in parallel with חמה 'fury', and is prophesied to come in 'flames of fire'. In Ps 18.16, we are not told explicitly what happens to the water, although we can infer from the previous verse that the waters have fled. The emphasis, as elsewhere in this section (cf. vv. 8–9, 13), is primarily on the force of YHWH's power and anger, with the purpose of rescuing the psalmist.[125]

---

[122] E.g. Ps 9.6; Isa 17.13; Nah 1.4. In non-theological contexts the verb has the sense of moral rebuke (e.g. Gen 37.10; Ruth 2.16).

[123] Macintosh 1969: 478, cf. LXX ἐπιτίμησις, Vg. *increpatio*.

[124] Reif 1971: 243.

[125] Cf. Ps 76.7–8; Isa 50.2.

The parallel expression in the final stich bears a striking resemblance to Exod 15.8, where the waters pile up ברוח אפך.[126] Weiser interprets this as a deliberate allusion to the saving event of the Exodus, designed to draw a connection between the deliverance of Israel at the beginning of its relationship with YHWH and the deliverance of the king.[127] Whether or not this was the intention of the psalmist is difficult to discern, but there is certainly an overlap of certain images which points to a common theological conceptualisation of historical events.

In light of the earlier discussion on fire and storm imagery (in v. 9), it is interesting that נשמה 'breath' has strong conceptual associations with fire and heat (e.g. Isa 30.33; Hos 13.15; cf. Isa 66.15). In Psalm 18, both wind and fire accompany YHWH's presence, and both proceed from YHWH's nose and mouth. It is possible that the waters were put to flight by both the force of the stormy blast and also the heat of YHWH's anger (cf. Nah 1.3, 6).[128] There is an interesting parallel in Hesiod's *Theogony,* in the description of Zeus' battle with Typhon: 'the heat and the blaze from both of them was on the dark-faced sea, from the thunder and lightning of Zeus and from the flame of the monster, from his blazing bolts and from the scorch and breath of his stormwinds'.[129] In this example, as in Ps 18.16, the storm wind is not just a strong force but something that scorches with heat.

This climactic verse reveals the full power and supremacy of YHWH in battle. The verse completes the series of pictures begun in v. 8, describing the impact of YHWH's angry presence on the very roots of the earth, and returns us spatially to the place of distress narrated in vv. 5–6. YHWH's aggression mounts throughout the theophany, until in v. 16 the foundations of the world are not just quaking in fear, but are stripped bare by the physical force of YHWH's anger, the blast of his breath. The whole of earth and heaven has been impacted by YHWH's anger and advent. Verse 16 also finishes off a number of threads which have been woven throughout the theophany. The description of YHWH's roar resonates conceptually with the trembling of earth in v. 8 and YHWH's thundering in the heavens in v. 14. It also glances back to the picture from v. 9 of YHWH breathing fire and smoke from his mouth and nostrils in the blast of wind that is like fiery breath, dispelling the enemy. Finally, both גערתך and מנשמת

[126] Ps 106.9 'redescribes' this event as a drying-up of the Reed Sea.
[127] Weiser 1962: 191, cf. Craigie 2004: 176.
[128] Cf. 'The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script', VII.8–10 (*CoS* I: 315).
[129] Hillers 1964: 221–5.

רוח אפך convey the force of YHWH's anger, recapitulating one of the dominant themes of the theophany.

In v. 16, YHWH's anger and action against the waters of the sea are used as a metaphorical lens to see YHWH's enemies being driven away and defeated. This serves both a poetic and a particular theological purpose: painting those who are threatening the life of the psalmist in mythological language establishes a conceptual connection between the theophany and vv. 5–6, but it also conveys the cosmic significance of the defeat of YHWH's enemies. The exposed channels of the sea and foundations of the world indicate that in the king's battles, through the strength of YHWH, the forces of death and Sheol have been overcome. The king's earthly battles are therefore inextricably bound to YHWH's cosmic battles.

Interpretation: vv. 8–16

A close study of the word-pictures alongside each other reveals the deep interconnectedness of motifs and imagery. In some ways the theophany is a microcosm of the way in which motifs are interwoven throughout the psalm. It is often noted that there is very little verbal repetition in the theophany and at first sight this may appear to contribute to an intentionally chaotic and enigmatic portrayal. However, as we have seen, amidst a wealth of incredibly vibrant images, there is much more continuity and overlapping than is often acknowledged. We have seen developments on motifs of noise: the crashing noise of the earth (v. 8), thunder and voice (v. 14) and YHWH's roar (v. 16); secondly of heat, anger and weapons: smoke, fire and coals (v. 9), falling hail and coals (v. 13), lightning arrows (v. 15) and scorching wind (v. 16); thirdly of speed and hidden-ness: the cloud (vv. 10, 12 and 13), the cherub and wind (v. 11) and the darkness (v. 12).

Different motifs slide in and out of focus, but the portrayal of YHWH's approach to battle and actions to secure a decisive victory is far from haphazard. It is held together by a number of metaphorical models, such as 'anger and judgment as fieriness', and 'warrior as a bird of prey', which are woven together to form a complex tapestry. Within the predominant model 'battle as a storm' the intertwining aspects of two main related figures emerge in the depiction of YHWH as the devouring warrior and the storm-deity, which together shed light on the portrayal of YHWH's advent and action. Both figures have overwhelming force and might, and both cause irreversible destruction.

In vv. 8–16 the psalmist's interpretation of an event—namely, victory in battle—entails a number of related 'frames' which are described in the theophany: i) YHWH's response to the king's cry for help, experienced as YHWH's presence and aid in battle, ii) YHWH's anger at the king's plight, and judgment against those oppressing him, iii) YHWH's victory in the battle. All three of these related referents are depicted through the narrative of an 'event', a theophany, which is told in a number of interlocking word-pictures. Just as Ricoeur describes a parable as *mythos,* a 'heuristic fiction' whose narrative form is understood to be 'fiction-redescription', the theophany 'narrative' in Psalm 18 could be seen as a mythical redescription of the king's battle and rescue.[130] He writes, 'poetry imitates reality only by *recreating* it at a mythical level of discourse'.[131] This seems to capture the essence of what theophanic language is aiming to do: to describe the reality of the psalmist's personal experience of YHWH and of YHWH's involvement in his life and in history. Such a subject demands the extraordinary word-pictures that we meet in this mythical-redescription.

Words and Pictures in Verses 17–20

Verse 17

He reached down from on high,[132]	יִשְׁלַח מִמָּרוֹם
he took me and drew me up out of the mighty waters	יִקָּחֵנִי יַמְשֵׁנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים

The use of שלח here is an elliptical form of the idiom that is usually expressed with יד, meaning 'to stretch out one's hand', or 'to reach out'. As in the latter English phrase, the Hebrew idiom can express an abstract idea of 'help', e.g. 'reaching out' to the needy (Prov 31.20), as well as the more concrete sense of reaching out in order to touch something (e.g. Gen 3.22; Exod 4.4; Judg 3.21). A parallel idea to the word-picture in this verse is found in Ps 138.7, where the full idiom occurs in parallel with ישע (hi.)

---

130 Ricoeur 1975: 31.

131 Ricoeur 1975: 87. In spite of Soskice's objection that the term 'redescription' does not do sufficient justice to the ability of novel poetic metaphors to "disclose for the first time" (Soskice 1985: 89), it seems to suit the theophany, drawing, as it is, on a well-worn model of battle as storm, but redescribing in a way that discloses new things on a number of different levels.

132 Seybold (1996: 76) supplies "seine Hand"; Cross and Freedman (1953: 26, n. 44) insert ידו following Ps 144.7 שלח ידיך ממרום. However, the elliptical expression is found elsewhere (e.g. 2 Sam 6.6) and perhaps here conveys the immediacy of YHWH's action.

in the context of YHWH rescuing the psalmist from distress and from the wrath of his enemies.

The repetition of שלח from v. 15 in the theophany underscores the difference in the portrayal of YHWH here. The king's deliverance is to be seen not only in terms of YHWH fighting his enemies (sending out arrows) but also as a personal act of YHWH, removing him from danger and from the overwhelming forces that have ensnared and surrounded him. The reader is thus taken back visually through this metaphor to the experience described in vv. 5–6, engaging the spatial motif again as the place of distress is contrasted with YHWH's location on high, מרום.

YHWH is often described as dwelling in or acting from מרום, which is קדש 'holy' (e.g. Isa 57.15; Jer 25.30; Ps 102.20) and set in contrast to ארץ and אדם (Isa 24.18, 21).[133] Here YHWH reaches down from the heights to rescue the psalmist. Since the king's distress is metaphorically 'located' in the depths, his rescue is pictured as being drawn out and up. As we shall see in the second half of the psalm, this movement facilitates the metaphorical transference between deliverance and victory in the second half of the psalm. Thus YHWH sets the psalmist 'on the heights' (v. 34), symbolic of both deliverance and victory.

לקח may appear at first sight to be redundant. Cross and Freedman, for example, argue that **ימשני** and **יקחני** are textual variants and that **ימשני** is to be preferred as the *lectio difficilior*.[134] However, an analysis of the uses of לקח reveals that it frequently occurs in anticipation of another verb, like a *verbum relativum*, with the effect of highlighting the subject's initiative and responsibility for that action.[135] This would suggest that לקח here serves to emphasize YHWH's intention to deliver the king.

The verb משה occurs only here and in Exod 2.10, where it is offered as an etymological explanation for Moses' name, following his rescue from the water. Although one may speculate on the potential theological connection between these two verses, the choice of משה here (rather than a more general term for deliverance such as נצל hi. in v. 18) is a fitting choice for the description of rescue from water. It paints a vivid picture

---

[133] In Mic 6.6 מרום is even used as a divine appellative. The Ugaritic *mrym* is commonly used to refer to the divine abode (Cross and Freedman 1953: 26, n. 45). Isa 24.18 shows the characteristic prophetic 'twisting' of a positive idea to one of doom—the windows of heaven are opened not for salvation but for judgement.

[134] Cross and Freedman (1953: 26 n. 46). Ps 144.7 offers two alternative verbs (פצה and נצל hi.) in its expression of this verse, perhaps making use of more familiar or less ambiguous verbs of deliverance.

[135] Seebass 1997: 17; cf. Judg 6.27; 2 Kgs 11.2, 4, 19, etc.

of the king's rescue as an ascent from the jaws of death, being 'drawn out' like a helpless and bedraggled creature from the overwhelming chaos waters that were drowning him. Together with שלח, it portrays YHWH not as a warrior but as a personal rescuer, reaching down and pulling him out of trouble.[136]

Images of a deity rescuing someone from water or the underworld, as a portrayal of rescue from all kinds of danger, were not unique to Israel (cf. discussion of Ludlul Bel Nemeqi in vv. 5–6). An Egyptian hymn to Amun-Re gives praise to the one 'who rescues the one who is already in the underworld'.[137] However, this phrase not only expresses rescue from a general kind of 'trouble', but conveys the cosmic significance of this act of YHWH. The expression מים רבים, the 'mighty waters', has strong associations with the subjugation of the sea, the primeval chaos waters, in ancient Near Eastern myths. By connecting vv. 16 and 17 through the depiction of enemies as chaos waters, the psalmist is able to create two contrasting yet complementary descriptions of the rescue: the first as military victory over the enemies (v. 16), and the second as personal deliverance (v. 17). Both images are picked up and developed in the second half of the psalm, and reinforce the bifurcation of victory and deliverance which is completed at the psalm's conclusion.

The insurgent waters of chaos provide a versatile symbol to represent all the powerful and threatening forces which are opposed to YHWH's will and order, and the expression 'mighty waters' describes all kinds of enemies, including personal enemies or undefined threats and dangers (e.g. Ps 32.6, cf. 124.4). It is often the aspect of a metaphorical word-picture that indicates an underlying model of the divine battle against chaos. מים רבים occurs predominantly in metaphors that describe or allude to the Reed Sea deliverance, often in parallel with ים.[138] In these cases, it similarly functions to represent the deliverance as an event of cosmic significance, although it is presented very differently from the theophany in Psalm 18, where the waters themselves depict the enemy. The phrase is also found in praises to YHWH's glory, lordship and majesty, where it is often associated with noisy waters thundering or roaring (Pss 29.3; 93.4, cf. descriptions of nations 'roaring', e.g. Isa 17.12f; Jer 51.55).

---

[136] The interpretation offered by May (1955: 9–21) of YHWH 'descending' through the waters of Sheol in order to rescue the psalmist is not at all implied by the metaphor—YHWH is able to reach down from on high without having to descend to Sheol.

[137] Beyerlin 1978:33, cit. in Berry 1993: 74.

[138] E.g. Exod 15.10; Isa 43.16; Hab 3.15; Ps 77.20; Neh 9.11.

The identification of the waters as human enemies that is confirmed by v. 18 is made explicit in the quasi-midrashic use of this verse in Ps 144.7, which sets מים רבים in parallel with יד בני נכר. In the context of Psalm 18, then, מים רבים reinforces the message of the theophany: historical battles reflect, and participate in, the cosmic battles.

Verse 18

He delivered me from my mighty enemy and from those who hated me,	יַצִּילֵנִי מֵאֹיְבִי[139] עָז וּמִמְשַׂנְאַי
for they were too strong for me	כִּי־אָמְצוּ מִמֶּנִּי

In more straightforward language, the psalmist re-tells the rescue from his enemies, echoing, and confirming the reason for, his confidence in being rescued in v. 4. Here a new 'salvation' word is used, נצל (hi.), which commonly expresses an act of separation, often with the sense of removal from danger.[140] The word-picture therefore spatially mimics משה from the previous verse, confirming the identity of the enemies as מים רבים, and strengthening the connection between YHWH's enemies in the theophany and the king's enemies.[141] The same verb occurs at the end of the psalm, describing YHWH's deliverance of the king from איש חמס, following a repetition of the spatial movement of rescue in terms of being 'exalted' (רום pol.) above his adversaries (v. 49).

The motif of strength recurs explicitly for the first time in a description of the enemies as mighty (עז) and strong (אמץ). The verb אמץ has strong associations with strength in war, making this the first description of the king's enemies (outside of the theophany) that explicitly identifies them as military enemies.[142] As we saw above in v. 2, the theme of strength recurs with variations throughout the psalm. Now the enemies' strength is in view in order to demonstrate YHWH's superior strength, and the king's utter dependence on him for deliverance. In the second half of the psalm the focus will shift to descriptions of the king's great strength, showing what he is capable of when YHWH is his support (vv. 19, 30, 33, etc). The

---

[139] LXX, Vg., Syr. and Tg. have pl. 'enemies'. 2 MSS add וממתקוממי after ומשנאי (cf. Ps 59.2).

[140] נצל hi. with the preposition מן usually indicates removal from danger, separation and rescue (Hossfeld and Kalthoff 1998: 536).

[141] The pairing of איב with שׂנא is found several times in the HB (e.g. Num 10.35; Pss 21.9; 68.2). The comparative pair in Ugaritic, *ib* and *šnu*, occurs in parallel in the context of Baal's theophany (KTU 1.4.VII.35–36).

[142] Cf. e.g. Deut 31.23; Amos 2.14; Nah 2.2.

divine gift of strength to the king plays an important part in royal ideology, as it was part of YHWH's promise to the king (Pss 80.18; 89.22), which was transferred (or democratized) to Israel in the exile (Isa 41.10).

Verse 19

They sprang up at me on the day of my oppression	יְקַדְּמוּנִי בְיוֹם־אֵידִי
but YHWH was a staff for me	וַיְהִי־יְהוָה לְמִשְׁעָן לִי

Continuing the description of the enemies from the previous verse, the use of קדם (pi.) echoes the action of the snares of death in v. 6, and highlights the visual and conceptual connections between the king's enemies and cosmic forces. As mentioned above (see v. 6), the verb קדם (pi.) is occasionally used in adversarial contexts, describing the King of Assyria (2 Kgs 19.32 = Isa 37.33), evil (Amos 9.10), days of affliction (Job 30.27) and Leviathan (Job 41.3). In each case, as in this verse, YHWH's superior strength is emphasized.

The expression יום־איד is found just eight times in the HB and is often translated 'day of disaster/calamity'.[143] The king's distress in Psalm 18 shares the contextual association of crushing military defeat that is present in other occurrences of the phrase, although here it is relieved, rather than caused, by YHWH (cf. Deut 32.35; Jer 18.17). The etymology of איד is uncertain and no consensus has yet been reached.[144] However, two proposals are interesting from the perspective of plausible word-pictures created by its occurrence here: i) the first is a basic sense of 'burden(ing)', shared by a number of Arabic words, e.g. *'awida* 'burden, oppress' (BDB 15b), *mu'yid* 'Unglück, Not, Verderben' (Ges[18] 45), cf. also Ug. *'d* 'overcharge, exact (a debt)' (*DULAT* 2, 15); and ii) Akk. *edu(m)* II, a Sumerian loan-word referring to a powerful flood, a raging tide, or high waves (translated 'Wasserflut, Wogenschwall' in *AHw* 187b), a 'rare and catastrophic event' (*CAD* E:36a).[145] In light of the following word-picture of YHWH as the king's זמשע his 'staff', the former suggestion would be more consistent, although the latter clearly resonates with depictions of enemy attack elsewhere in the psalm.

---

[143] The following terms of distress occur in collocation with איד: פקדה 'visitation'/'punishment' (Jer 46.21), צרה 'distress', צוקה 'pressure' (Prov 1.27), פיד 'disaster' (Prov 24.22), חבלים 'cords' (Job 21.17).

[144] See Sæbø 1971.

[145] Cf. Sæbø 1970; cf. the use of אֵד in Gen 2.6 and Job 36.27.

The meaning of משען needs to be understood in terms of this threat facing the king—the enemies aggressively 'confronting' him (קדם), and the position of weakness and humiliation that he is in. משען occurs only here and in Isa 3.1, where the meaning is unclear. It is paired with משענת (to indicate support of every kind)[146] in a description of what YHWH will withdraw from Jerusalem and Judah.[147] In Psalm 18 משען is usually translated 'support' or 'stay',[148] which loses the more specific connotation of 'something to lean upon'. The translation of 'staff' here is supported by the use of the verb שען to describe the act of leaning on someone or something, in both a figurative and non-figurative sense.[149] The related noun משענת also refers to a staff to lean on for physical support (Exod 21.19; Zech 8.4), as a symbol of authority (e.g. Num 21.18; cf. Ps 23.4), and to perform miracles (Judg 6.21; 2 Kgs 4.29, 31), and is used figuratively to describe political support (2 Kgs 18.21 = Isa 36.8, cf. Ezek 29.6).

The construction היה + ל 'be as'[150] also suggests that a particular object is implied, rather than a general, abstract sense of 'support'. The function of the preposition ל is similar to the 'lamed of purpose' (e.g. Gen 1.29; 2 Sam 14.17; Hab 1.11).[151] Depicting YHWH as the king's staff vividly expresses the firmness, strength, and reliability of YHWH's support in facing the enemies. Figurative uses of the verb שען often occur in the context of advocating trust in, and reliance on, YHWH, and warning against the dangers of 'leaning on' anything else (e.g. Isa 10.20; 30.12–13). The semantic connection between YHWH as 'support' and the king's choice to rely on YHWH relates back to vv. 2–3 and the choice to seek refuge, to put one's trust, in YHWH's strength. This aspect of the word-picture is also brought to light by the focus on the king's righteousness in the following section of the psalm (vv. 21–25).

---

146 GKC §122v.

147 The reference to 'support' and 'staff' as the material provision of bread and water appears to be the explanatory addition of a later redactor (perhaps in a time of siege or distress), suggesting that משען and משענה refer to prominent positions of leadership and support in society, which are listed in the following verses (cf. Childs 2001: 33; Williamson 2006: 243). The Versions translate the nouns in Isa 3.1 with terms of strength (LXX ἰσχύοντα καί ἰσχύουσαν; Vg. *validum et fortem*), whereas in Ps 18.19 משען rendered ἀντιστήριγμά 'support' (LXX) and *protector* (Vg.).

148 With the exception of Berry (1993: 51).

149 E.g. Judg 16.26; Job 8.15; Isa 10.20.

150 *DCH* 481 (3c).

151 Cf. Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 209.

Verse 20

He brought me out to a broad place;	וַיּוֹצִיאֵנִי לַמֶּרְחָב
he rescued me for he delighted in me	יְחַלְּצֵנִי כִּי חָפֵץ בִּי

The psalmist paints a word-picture of the outcome of YHWH's saving action which operates on two different levels, and gives the reason for it: he has been led to a spacious place, and he has been rescued because he found favour with YHWH. Alongside the vertical orientational dimension to the psalm, here we encounter the horizontal, in which tight and narrow spaces speak of threat, danger and death, while broad and spacious places indicate freedom, deliverance and life. This picture therefore 'responds to' the images of distress in vv. 5–6.

Just as the images of being confined and restricted (חבלי, מות, מוקשי, צר שאול) can be understood on a general (cosmic) level as well as a military one, so this picture can be understood on a general (spatial) level as well as a military one. It is this latter aspect that is often missed. To be in a broad place in battle is to be in open ground, where there is freedom of movement for both sides.[152] 'Open space' therefore operates as a conceptual model for freedom, and the gift of space (the act of being led into open ground) as liberation. There are prayers and praises to YHWH in the Psalms for bringing people out (יצא hi.) of distress, or darkness, usually with the sense of liberation (e.g. Ps 31.5). The verb is frequently found in this form to describe the Exodus deliverance, the 'bringing out' of Egypt, which becomes a formulaic expression of hope for liberation in exilic texts (e.g. Exod 29.46; cf. Ezek 20.6).

The references to צר and מרחב in v. 7 and v. 20 correspond closely to models of distress as 'narrowness' and rescue as 'broadness' elsewhere in the psalms (e.g. Pss 4.1; 31.8–9; 118.5, etc.). Two of these psalms share a number of themes and motifs with Psalm 18. In Ps 31.9 YHWH is praised for setting the psalmist's feet in a broad place, rather than delivering him into the hands of his enemies. In Ps 118, a victory psalm, YHWH answers the psalmist's cry and sets him in a broad place, having been surrounded on all sides by his enemies (v. 10f). In both of these examples מרחב is seen in contrast to distress and adversity (צרות Ps 31.8; 118.5 מצר, cf. Ps 4.2). The same root recurs later on in the psalm in a description of YHWH

[152] Cf. the importance of waiting until the army is 'in the open' before mounting an attack (*ANET* 235–6); see also the discussion of the attack on Megiddo by Thutmose III in Davies 1986: 51–55.

providing a wide place for the king's steps (v. 37), again indicating freedom of movement.

חלץ is used to describe general deliverance in a number of different contexts, including death, fear, trouble, distress, evildoers, and poverty, although it is only used with מן a few times (e.g. Ps 116.8). Other uses of the qal and piel describe the action of pulling something off or out (e.g. Lev 14.40). In a similar context to Psalm 18 it describes rescue after military defeat in Ps 60.7 = 108.7. An interesting parallel is found in a salvation oracle in the Aramaic Zakir Stela, commemorating a victory for Zakkur.[153]

חפץ is used in theological contexts to express God's desire for, or delight in, certain things or people (e.g. 1 Sam 15.22; Mic 7.18). YHWH's delight is expressed most often in contexts of obedience and right behaviour, as we find here (vv. 21–25, cf. Ps 41.12–13). However, in a few texts YHWH's חפץ is described in the context of his relationship with David and Solomon (2 Sam 15.26; 1 Kgs 10.9) and his favour and blessing upon them, and also with the whole nation of Israel (e.g. Isa 62.4). These examples indicate that this favour is neither deserved nor earned but granted by God's grace and mercy. In very similar language to Psalm 18, Ps 22.9 presents this belief as a mocking challenge on the lips of the psalmist's enemies: 'let him deliver (נצל hi.) him if he delights (חפץ) in him!'. If Psalm 18 ended here, one could argue that v. 20 is using חפץ in this sense of undeserved blessing. However, the language of vv. 21–28 suggests the more common association between YHWH's favour and the king's action and conduct is in view here.

Interpretation: vv. 17–20

The language here plays an instrumental role in facilitating or cementing metaphorical transference between different frames within the psalm. As mentioned above, v. 17 establishes strong conceptual connections between vv. 5–6 and the theophany, using mythological language to ensure that YHWH's enemies are understood as the king's enemies, and v. 18 confirms the meaning of the word-picture in language which mirrors the saving action of YHWH. Verses 19–20 then use word-pictures with strong military associations, which need to be drawn out in order to appreciate the

[153] *ANET* 655–56, cf. Phoenician PNs, חלצבעל and חלץ (BDB 322b).

psalmist's artistry and use of spatial imagery, and to underline the conceptual coherence of the psalm as a whole.

The psalmist deliberately paints images of rescue which correspond to the distress of the psalmist in vv. 5–6 in terms of being in the depths (lifted out in v. 17), and being confined to a narrow place (brought to a broad place in v. 19), but he also uses language which 'fills in' significant gaps about the enemies and the king's rescue in battle. Until now there has been no explanation of how YHWH assisted the king, nor a clear depiction of the king's military predicament. These are both supplied in this short section. The description of YHWH as a staff providing strength and support sits alongside the description of the king's enemies which resonates with the action of the snares of death in v. 6 (קדם), strengthening the metaphorical transference between the cosmic and military enemies. Then we are given the image of YHWH as a commander, leading the king to an open plain. This confirms the military interpretation that was suggested by the picture of traps and snares in vv. 5–6, that the king was in a tight spot in battle, surrounded on all sides—a situation that was decisively reversed by YHWH's help.

CHAPTER SIX

TRANSLATION AND EXEGESIS OF PSALM 18.21–30

At the heart of the psalm, we find a collection of reflective assertions, acknowledgements and proclamations about righteousness, justice and faithfulness: i) an assertion of the king's piety as grounds for divine favour (vv. 21–25), ii) a reflection on, and celebration of, divine justice and faithfulness (vv. 26–28), and iii) an acknowledgment and celebration of what the king can achieve with YHWH's strength (vv. 29–30). The linguistic expressions at the beginning of this section, although less complex and ambiguous than some others in the psalm, generate much richer and deeper ideas than first appears.[1]

Words and Pictures in Verses 21–25

Verse 21

יִגְמְלֵנִי יְהוָה כְּצִדְקִי כְּבֹר יָדַי יָשִׁיב לִי	*YHWH has dealt with me according to my righteousness* *according to the cleanness of my hands he has recompensed me.*

In the Psalms, YHWH's action of גמל is usually a response to ethically significant human actions, and is often associated with righteousness, deliverance, and divine grace or faithfulness.[2] The construction here is atypical of גמל in theological contexts, lacking the preposition על and using the particle כ to qualify the verb (cf. Ps 103.10). The absence of על may reveal the familial quality of the king's relationship with YHWH (cf. Isa 63.7).[3] The use of כ with שוב hi. + ל is found elsewhere in similar contexts (e.g. Prov 24.12; Hos 12.3), as is the idea that YHWH's dealings with people (blessings, rewards, and punishments) are proportionate to a particular standard (expressed by כ).[4] The notion of reward is repeated

---

[1] This section has been stamped with the judgement of "Farblosigkeit" by Gunkel (1926: 67).

[2] Cf. Akk. *gamālu* 'to reward', 'to spare/save', to 'treat kindly' (*AHw* 275f).

[3] Seybold 1978: 31.

[4] E.g. Num 7.7; Ps 35.24.

by the use of שוב hi., which describes 'returning something to someone' or 'paying someone back' (e.g. Lev 25.27), and thus figuratively of divine recompense (e.g. 2 Sam 16.12; etc.), echoing the analogical use of גמל.[5]

The language of this section reveals a common biblical conceptual model which represents positive life experiences (health, success, victory, etc.) as reward, and negative experiences (sickness, failure, defeat, etc.) as judgement, recompense, or deserved punishment.[6] Within this model, there is potentially room both for divine reward for righteousness and for divine grace (cf. Pss 103.10; 116.7–8, 12). In Psalm 18, however, YHWH's action (גמל) is presented as a direct response to, and even due reward for, the king's own righteousness (כצדקי), although the king's dependence on YHWH's mercy is evident from the wider context of the psalm (v. 51).

צדק is frequently associated in the HB with deliverance or vindication (Ps 4.2; Isa 51.5), as well as justice and moral behaviour (Isa 11.5), and the two are often deeply interconnected.[7] The king is commanded to love and to judge with צדק (e.g. Deut 1.16) and to rule with righteousness (Isa 32.1; cf. 2 Sam 23.3). The particular meaning of צדק in Ps 18.21 and 25 is informed by the word-pictures that follow, of clean hands, of keeping the 'ways' of YHWH, and of being תמים (cf. Ezek 18.6–9). The following two verses, introduced by כי clauses, fill in the content of כצדקי and ידי כבר.

The declaration of clean hands belongs to a constellation of expressions of purity, innocence and righteousness relating to one's deeds and intentions in the sight of God.[8] This metaphorical word-picture involves metonymy—one's hands are responsible for, and therefore symbolic of, one's actions (cf. Ps 24.4); it also rests on an underlying model of physical cleanliness as innocence: if one's hands are clean, one has done no wrong (cf. Gen 20.5). Related to this are passages which seem to refer to an external ritual of hand-washing, symbolizing innocence in the case of murder (Deut 21.6), and in the context of a temple ritual (Ps 26.6, cf. Ps 73.13).[9] According to the Entrance-liturgy in Ps 24.4 (cf. also Ps 15.3–5 and

---

[5] שוב hi. + לְ is often used in contexts of reward or recompense (e.g. Hos 12.3, 15; Ps 28.4; Job 33.26).

[6] E.g. Ps 13.6; Isa 63.7, cf. Isa 35.4 גמול אלהים 'the recompense of God'. The sense of 'repaying' someone for their actions is confirmed by the frequent occurrences of גמל with שוב (qal and hi.), cf. e.g. Gen 50.15; Oba 15; Ps 116.12; Prov 12.14.

[7] E.g. Pss 7; 17; 26; 35; 40; 44.

[8] E.g. Isa 1.16; Jer 4.14; Job 11.4. This expression takes different forms, e.g. נְקִי כַפַּיִם (Ps 24.4); טֶהֳרַ יָדַיִם (Job 17.9); בֹּר יָדַיִם (Ps 18.21, 25); בֹּר כַּפַּיִם (Job 22.30).

[9] Ps 26.6 could be understood as an individual symbolic action in the context of a false accusation, accompanying a declaration of innocence in the temple. References to the soap or lye used for cleansing in Job 9.30 and Jer 2.22 may well be a development of

Isa 33.14–16), the one who has clean hands and a pure heart is the one who may ascend the hill of YHWH and stand in his holy place, and he/she will receive God's blessing and צדקה (v. 5).

The root ברר occurs five times in the group of Psalms 15–24, but only once elsewhere in the Psalter (73.1). In Job 22.30 ברר describes clean hands in the context of moral behaviour and has a conceptual parallel in Gen 20.5, which describes the 'innocence' (נקיון) of Abimelech's hands (cf. Ps 24.4). It also describes purity or integrity of heart, belonging to those who not only refrain from doing evil but intend no evil (Pss 24.4; 73.1). It is associated with the root טהר, which is frequently used in expressions of Levitical purity, as well as in contexts of moral uprightness.[10]

Verse 22

For I have kept the ways of YHWH	כִּי־שָׁמַרְתִּי דַּרְכֵי יְהוָה
and have not wickedly departed from my God	וְלֹא־רָשַׁעְתִּי מֵאֱלֹהָי

שמר is used numerous times in Deuteronomy and the Dtr history to describe observance of the commandments, although, interestingly, not with דרך (Deut 8.6; 28.9, etc). The more typical deuteronomic/-istic formula is הלך בדרכיו 'to walk in his ways' (e.g. Deut 8.6; 10.12; 11.22; Josh 22.5; 1 Kgs 2.3; 3.14). דרך occurs as a direct object with שמר several times outside of Deuteronomy and Dtr history, where it is also associated explicitly with the law and commandments (e.g. Mal 2.9; Job 23.11), and with justice and righteousness (e.g. Gen 18.19).

דרך is a dominant motif in this central section of the psalm, appearing several times with a slightly different sense each time. J. Aitken defines five distinct figurative uses of דרך, to describe: i) typical behaviour, ii) daily life, iii) one's moral conduct, iv) a particular moral course (e.g. of righteousness, cf. Prov 16.31), and v) 'a course prescribed by God expressed as the דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה'.[11] Texts using this latter expression indicate that דרך in this sense is closely associated (if not in some case virtually synonymous) with God's commandments (e.g. Exod 18.20; Deut 9.16). Other texts, including Ps 18.22, reveal the rich, generative capacity of this expression

---

the metaphor found in Ps 18 rather than providing support for a hypothetical atonement ceremony, for which there is little textual evidence, *pace* Paschen (1970: 70). See also Lev 14.8–9; 15.5 *et passim*; Num 19.7, 8, 19, etc.

[10] E.g. Lev 16.30; Prov 20.9; 22.11 (describing לב); 30.12; Hab 1.13, cf. Paschen 1970: 19–20.

[11] Aitken 1998: 29.

as an underlying metaphorical model: moral conduct directed by laws prescribed by God as 'the way of YHWH'.

The following example from Job provides a particularly close parallel to Psalm 18, making use of very similar conceptual expressions to declare Job's innocence בַּאֲשֻׁרוֹ אָחֲזָה רַגְלִי דַּרְכּוֹ שָׁמַרְתִּי וְלֹא־אָט *My foot has grasped his footsteps; I have kept his way and have not turned aside* (Job 23.11). Here the association of 'way' and 'commandment' is not in view as it is in Psalm 18. The path Job talks about is inscribed with YHWH's own footprints, i.e. it is the path set by God's own conduct, and one that is characterized by God's presence (cf. Ps 119.35).[12]

The combination of שמר with דרך in v. 22 conceptually triggers this model of obedience or law-observance as 'walking on the right path'. The ambiguity of שמר (unusually) also works in English, since we talk of 'keeping' a law and 'keeping to' a path. The second half of the verse is overflowing with meaning, created by a juxtaposition of the two frames of reference established in the first half: law-observance and pathway. Firstly, the conceptual blend from the first stich helps to 'fill in' the gap in the second, which communicates 'departure' from the path מאלהי without any verb actually expressing such an idea. Secondly, מאלהי conveys divine presence on the path. Thirdly, רשעתי 'acting wickedly' (providing an antithesis to צדק in the previous verse) belongs to the first frame of reference, law-keeping, and establishes that acting wickedly is a departure from the divine path.

Verse 23

For all his judgements were before me	כִּי כָל־מִשְׁפָּטָיו לְנֶגְדִּי
and his statutes I have not put away from me	וְחֻקֹּתָיו לֹא־אָסִיר מֶנִּי
(*and from his statutes I have not turned aside*	(2 Sam 22 וְחֻקֹּתָיו לֹא־אָסוּר מִמֶּנָּה

This verse stands at the centre of the concentric pattern of this inclusio, providing a focus on the king's obedience to YHWH's statutes and ordinances. God's laws are described several times as being set 'before' the people (with לפני, e.g. Deut 4.8, 44); several times in Jeremiah this is used in conjunction with 'walking' imagery (e.g. Jer 9.13; 26.4; 44.10). However, the human choice to keep the commandments before one's eyes finds a closer parallel in Ps 119.6, where the psalmist speaks of gazing (*NRSV* 'fixing his eyes') on all the commandments (cf. vv. 15, 117). In Ps 26.3 it is

[12] Cf. Hos 14.9.

YHWH's faithfulness that is before the psalmist's eyes (לנגד עיני), enabling him to walk in faithfulness.

The textual variants in the second stich present slightly different images and potentially impact the meaning of the word-picture in the first. The 2 Samuel 22 version can be interpreted as continuing the conceptual model of ethical behaviour as walking along a path, this time depicting the statutes and ordinances themselves as the right paths that are in front of him (לנגדי 'before me', cf. Ps 101.2–3). This makes the כי clause relate to v. 21, acting as a supplement to v. 22. It bears a striking resemblance to the guidelines for royal authority given in Deut 17.19–20:

> It [the law] shall remain with him and he shall read in it all the days of his life . . . diligently observing all the words of this law and these statutes, neither exalting himself above other members of the community *nor turning aside* (סור) *from the commandment* (מן־המצוה), *either to the right or to the left*, so that he and his descendants may reign long over his kingdom in Israel. (*NRSV*)

In 2 Sam 22, to turn away or turn aside (סור) from the commandments is therefore to turn aside from the right path, which is disobedience and will lead to 'unrighteousness' (cf. e.g. Exod 32.8; Deut 28.14; 1 Kgs 15.5; 22.43).

The slightly different word-picture in Psalm 18 conveys a different action of 'putting aside' rather than 'turning aside from' the commandments, used elsewhere of the Israelites 'putting away' foreign gods (Judg 10.16). The focus of the word-pictures thus becomes what is in one's sight, in one's presence, and thus what is of central importance in one's life and worship (as in v. 23a), rather than eliciting the particular association of 'pathway'. Similarly, in Ps 16.8, the psalmist describes his action of setting YHWH always before him: שויתי יהוה לנגדי תמיד. This image is not at odds with the general conception of behavior as pathway: with YHWH himself or the commandments in front of him, the psalmist cannot be led astray or take the wrong ethical 'path'.

Verse 24

And I have been blameless in relationship with him	וָאֱהִי תָמִים עִמּוֹ
and I have kept myself away from my sinfulness	וָאֶשְׁתַּמֵּר מֵעֲוֹנִי

תמים occurs strikingly four times in Psalm 18 between vv. 24 and 33. It has a wide semantic range, including ideas of completion, wholeness and perfection, and is explicitly associated several times with righteousness: the one who walks תמים may enter the temple (Ps 15.2), and will be saved

(Prov 28.18); and those who are תמימי דרך are YHWH's delight (Prov 11.20, cf. Pss 84.12; 119.1).[13] In this verse, as in a few other poetic texts, it is used to characterize people and their ethical behaviour in terms of their relationship with God.[14] As von Rad observes, the use of the preposition עם with תמים implies something about the quality of the relationship with YHWH. He highlights similar expressions denoting terms of relationship, e.g. ישר עם in 2 Kgs 10.15 and שלם את in Gen 34.21.[15] The same construction (היה תמים עם) is found in Deut 18.13, in the context of prohibition against pagan practices: 'You must be faultless in your relationship with Yahweh your God' (*NJB*).

תמים also occurs in v. 26 with a similar meaning and then twice more in different descriptions of the 'way' (דרך) of YHWH and of the king in vv. 31 and 33. Adam argues that the word has a key compositional function, connecting the idea of YHWH's delight (v. 20b) with the king's righteousness (vv. 21–25) and establishing a link with the following section (vv. 32ff). The context of תמים in v. 33, and its association with rescue / victory rather than moral behaviour, could indicate that this section is a later addition. Alternatively, the repetition of תמים in vv. 21–30 could be a skilful word-play designed to connect different sections of the psalm together.

The repetition of שמר connects this verse with v. 22, emphasized by the translation 'kept'. Within the concentric pattern of this section, both verses envelop the focus of this obedience: the decrees and statutes (v. 23). That is, by keeping to the ways of YHWH, he has kept himself from guilt; in keeping to the path of YHWH, he has kept himself upright. It is in this light that מעוני should be understood—as hypothetical sins—those he *could* commit, or the guilt which he *could* incur as a result of such sins.[16] The collective singular is used elsewhere to denote both guilt and particular acts of sinfulness (e.g. Exod 28.43; Pss 32.2; 51.4; Prov 16.6).[17]

---

[13] Accompanying synonyms in ethical contexts include יָשָׁר / יֹשֶׁר 'straight(ness)' / 'upright(ness)' (e.g. 1 Kgs 9.4; Pss 25.21; 37.37), and antonyms include עקש 'crooked' / 'perverse' (e.g. Prov 10.9; 11.20).

[14] E.g. Prov 11.5; Job 12.4. This use is also found in texts usually ascribed to 'P' (e.g. Gen 6.9; 17.1), cf. Koch 1976b: 1047.

[15] Von Rad 1962: 372, n. 6, cf. Kwakkel 2002: 247.

[16] Cf. the use of the 1st person sg. suffix in Prov 20.9 and Jon 4.8 (see Kwakkel 2002: 249).

[17] Cf. e.g. חטאת in Prov 20.9.

Verse 25

And YHWH has recompensed me according to my righteousness,	וַיָּשֶׁב־יְהוָה לִי כְּצִדְקִי
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight	כְּבֹר יָדַי לְנֶגֶד עֵינָיו

With slight (but not insignificant) variations, this verse echoes the beginning of the section, moving שוב to the position previously occupied by גמל and so making room for the metonymic expression לנגד עיניו, meaning 'in his sight' (cf. the English expression 'She can do no wrong *in his eyes*').[18] This latter phrase may be compared to expressions elsewhere (with the same preposition נגד) which describe God as an eye-witness to human actions (e.g. Isa 1.16; Jer 16.17). There is an interesting antithetical conceptual parallel in Isa 1.16–17, a command to Judah to wash itself, to cleanse its hands from blood, to take away (סור hi., cf. Ps 18.23) its evil deeds from YHWH's sight.

The image-field of word-pictures associated with eyes (and their function) is large and complex, but one of the dominant themes is that of judgement. Just as the eyes make aesthetic judgements (e.g. Gen 3.6), so they also make moral judgements (e.g. Jer 5.3). Thus the psalmist declares that the boastful will not stand לנגד עיניך 'before your eyes' (Ps 5.6).[19] In Ps 18.25, this phrase means that the king is rewarded according to his righteousness before YHWH's eyes—in his judgement. This verse thus provides a link between vv. 21–25 and what follows. It is not only a declaration of the king's moral purity, emphasized by the repetition of צדק and בר, but also an introduction to YHWH's 'ways' of perfection and loyalty, which is the theme of the next few verses.

Interpretation: vv. 21–25

The concentric structure of these verses (a b c b^1 a^1) emphasizes the centrality of YHWH's judgements and stat6utes. The three inner verses of this section (22–24) build up several different but complementary pictures of how the king is righteous: it means that he has 'clean hands', he keeps to

[18] Cf. the use of שוב hi. + ל in contexts of reward or recompense (e.g. Hos 12.3,15; Ps 28.4).

[19] The expression בעיני יהוה is found frequently in Deuteronomy and the Dtr history, and is most often associated with doing good/evil (טוב / רע) or doing what is right (ישר), in the context of keeping the commandments (e.g. Deut 6.17–18; 13.19; 31.29) or following YHWH and walking in his or another way (e.g. 1 Kgs 11.6; 15.5, 26, 34; 2 Kgs 8.18).

the right paths, he observes the commandments, and he keeps away from sin. According to the underlying models of right behaviour as walking on a particular path, 'keeping the paths' means not only to obey God's laws and the way of life 'prescribed' by God, but also to stay in the presence of God, since it is contrasted with 'acting wickedly away from God', implying a departure from his presence.

The king's righteousness, then, is framed in terms of being in a right relationship with God, in which he keeps himself away from sin and guilt. Book-ending the section is a declaration that the king has found favour with YHWH (v. 20) because he is righteous (vv. 21 and 25): he has lived in a right relationship with YHWH, according to YHWH's laws, and his deliverance in battle is his just reward for loyalty, purity, and humility. Verse 25 ensures that we understand this righteousness and moral purity from a divine perspective. It is *in God's sight* that the king can be considered righteous and pure and worthy of deliverance, but it is also because of God's presence with him that he is able to do what he does. This short section therefore serves as a springboard of praise for celebrating YHWH's justice, faithfulness and strength (vv. 26–31).

The association of military deliverance with just reward for righteousness is not unique to Psalm 18 (cf. Pss 66.18; 132.12). An interesting contextual parallel can be found in 1 Sam 26.23–24, where David, having spared Saul's life, declares that YHWH rewards everyone (שוב + ל) for his righteousness (צדקה) and faithfulness (אמונה). This association is seen from the opposite side in Ps 89.20–38, from a position of weakness, defeat, and humiliation. It presents the two conflicting aspects of Nathan's oracle in 2 Sam 7.14–16, reflecting upon, and wrestling with, the implication of the divine promise.[20]

Words and Pictures in Verses 26–30

Verse 26

With the faithful you show your faithfulness,	עִם־חָסִיד תִּתְחַסָּד
With the blameless you show your blamelessness	עִם־גִּבַּר[21]תָּמִים תִּתַּמָּם

[20] Cf. Crouch 2009: 73.

[21] Cross and Freedman omit גבר on metrical grounds, supported by the Peshitta. However, it is also attested in 11QPs^{d} and 5/6 Ḥev Psalms. The reasons for its inclusion can be easily understood if one looks at other uses of גבר in the Psalms, where it describes a God-fearing, righteous man—one who is in a close relationship with God (e.g. Pss 34.9; 37.23), see Kosmala 1964.

The five-verse strophe in vv. 26–30 is distinguished from the preceding one by its striking aural impact and the shift from 3rd person narrative to 2nd person address. This strophe provides a smooth transition to the 'hymnic mood' which characterizes the second half of the psalm, praising YHWH for his righteousness, and then for his strength and aid in battle. Berry identifies it as 'one of the clearest, longest sustained formal structures in the psalm', marked by the opening of each stich.[22] Verses 26–7 stand at the rhetorical centre of the psalm. The lexical connection with v. 24 (תמים) identifies v. 26 as an explanation of *why* YHWH acted as he did towards the psalmist: he acted according to his usual response to faithfulness, which is to be faithful. The language here is predominantly analogical rather than metaphorical. The idea of God as loyal or faithful can be understood by extension from human loyalty, and as morally perfect (since he is the author of moral law), from the idea of human 'uprightness' or 'blamelessness'.

The term חסיד occurs several times in the Psalms to describe those who are set apart by YHWH (e.g. Ps 4.4) and those whom YHWH watches over, protects and delivers from enemies or danger (e.g. Pss 16.10; 32.6). In Ps 86.2, the expression כי־חסיד אני is the grounds for the psalmist's plea for help against his enemies. חסיד appears in parallel with אמונים 'faithful' (Ps 12.2) and ישר 'upright' (Mic 7.2), while those who are not חסיד are described as איש־מרמה ועולה 'deceitful and unjust' (Ps 43.1). When humans do acts of חסד, there is an element of reciprocity. This is sometimes expressed in covenant language (e.g. Gen 21.23; Josh 2.12, 14; 1 Sam 20.8, 14), and sometimes less formally, in the sense that acts of kindness from one person are elicited in response to previous acts of kindness from another (e.g. 2 Sam 2.5; 10.2; 1 Kgs 2.7).

The verbal form חסד is only found here in the HB, and is the first of four rare hithpael forms in these two verses that describe YHWH's actions. This seems to be an example of *catachresis*—an extension of language to fill a lexical gap.[23] Here the language is extended by parallel syntax, producing a verb from a noun, i.e. 'doing חסד', similar to English verbal noun extensions such as 'shopping', 'emailing', etc. This creates a 'sing-song' rhythm by word-play, and is so distinctive that Cross and Freedman have identified it as an ancient couplet.[24] The denominative use of the hithpael form

[22] Berry (1993: 91), *contra* Hossfeld and Zenger (1993: 127) who treat vv. 26–32 as a unit.
[23] See Soskice 1985: 61ff.
[24] Cross and Freedman 1953: 21.

is rare, although it is understood by some commentators and the majority of translators to have a reflexive sense 'to show oneself to be', which fits well in this context.[25] There is a comparable usage of the form found in Ezek 38.23 והתגדלתי והתקדשתי *And I will show my greatness and display my holiness*.

Elsewhere, the adjective חסיד is predicated of YHWH in the context of his forgiveness (Jer 3.12), and it occurs in parallel with צדיק to describe all his actions (Ps 145.17). In the context of Psalm 18, it seems that the emphasis on YHWH's action here is his *response* to loyalty, which is reciprocated faithfulness, i.e. when one of YHWH's faithful calls on him for help, he will show faithfulness by coming to his aid. Within the wider literary co-text, those Psalms that mention one who is חסיד frequently also contain terms for seeking help or refuge from God (e.g. Pss 4.6; 16.1; 31.2–5; cf. Ps 18.3).

תמים, as mentioned above (see v. 24), sometimes characterizes people and their relationship with God, particularly in the Psalms, Proverbs and Job. Its pairing here with גבר suggests a 'man of integrity'—one who is morally upright and blameless in his relationship with God (cf. Gen 17.1; 20.5; Job 1.1; 9.20–22). The adjective תם and related words occur several times in an antonymous word-pair with עקש 'crooked' (cf. Ps 18.27), again suggesting that its meaning is 'to be of good moral character'.[26]

The verb תמם (htp.) is unique here and seems to be another instance of catachresis: 'to *do* blamelessness', i.e. to *act* blamelessly. The only other semantic verbal 'co-ordinate' in the HB is תמם (hi.) in Job 22.3, in the (human) context of making one's ways perfect and תמם (qal) in Ps 19.14, which is associated with (human) ethical purity. However, תמם is used elsewhere to describe YHWH's deeds (Deut 32.4), knowledge (Job 36.4; 37.16) and ways (Ps 18.31). Cross and Freedman's rendering 'you are straightforward' provides a good contrast to עקש 'crooked', although does not adequately express the ethical dimension of תמם and the word-play is lost.

Verse 27

With the pure you show your purity	עִם־נָבָר תִּתְבָּרָר
But with the crooked you wrestle	וְעִם־עִקֵּשׁ תִּתְפַּתָּל

[25] It is generally agreed that this verbal form refers to the action of considering or showing oneself (truthfully or not) to be in a particular state (e.g. 2 Sam 13.5), cf. Seybold 1996: 82; Joüon and Muraoka 1993: 159; Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 430–1).

[26] E.g. Prov 10.9; 11.20.

נבר is the niphal participle, indicating one who keeps himself pure, who can be considered morally blameless.[27] Like תמים, בר is not found elsewhere to describe God directly, only his commandment (Ps 19.9). The context of divine justice in relation to humans suggests that God is pure (and without fault) in terms of his relationship with those who are obedient; he acts as is his nature to act, and this is beyond reproach.

In a number of word-pictures in moral contexts, עקש (adj.) is usually translated 'crooked, 'twisted' or 'perverted'. In Mic 3.9, for example, wicked rulers are described as those who abhor judgment and 'twist everything that is straight' (כל־הישרה יעקשו), i.e. they pervert all justice. Unjust or 'crooked' behaviour is illustrated by the word-picture of a person's דרך as עקש (e.g. Isa 59.8). In Proverbs the paths of the crooked are full of thorns and snares (22.5), in contrast to הולך תמים 'one who walks with integrity' (28.18). A person's external behaviour, symbolized by walking along or making a crooked path, is closely intertwined with a person's internal attitude: in contrast to those who follow blameless ways (Prov 11.20), those who follow crooked paths have a crooked mind, and are associated with those who pervert (lit. 'twist') themselves with their tongues (Prov 17.20).

While פתל is closely related to עקש, it is odd that this final pair of juxtaposed verbs and adjectives are not from the same root (although they do appear together elsewhere, e.g. Deut 32.5; Prov 8.8). The failure to continue the root repetition from the previous three lines (the use of פתל htp. rather than עקש htp.) may be intended to jar the ear, giving something unexpected so that one pays more attention to it, or it may indicate that something else is going on. A conceptual parallel in Job 5.11–14, describes how YHWH rescues and saves the poor and needy, but frustrates the plans of the twisted (נפתלים). While the unusual verbal forms in the description of YHWH as 'upright' or 'pure' are quite striking, the notion in Psalm 18 of YHWH showing himself to be 'crooked' or perverse is shocking, to say the least. Translators have clearly wrestled with it, e.g. 'you make yourself *seem* tortuous' [italics mine] (*ESV*), 'you show yourself astute' (*NASB*), 'you show yourself shrewd' (*NIV*), 'you are wily' (*NJPS*), 'you show yourself perverse' (*NRSV*). It is language that normally occurs

[27] ברר ni. can be used to describe both moral purity and ceremonial purity (BDB 141a), cf. Dan 12.10.

in opposition to the semantic field of righteousness, yet it is being used here *within* the context of YHWH's righteousness.[28]

It seems that פתל, whilst semantically related to עקש, has another nuance which is not as repugnant as עקש. This semantic relationship facilitates an ingenious word-play on the meaning of פתל. Within the related image-field of word-pictures, the only one which opens up the potential meaning here occurs in Gen 30.8, where Rachel describes her 'wrestlings' with Leah (נפתלתי אלהים נפתולי). Although the precise meaning of the phrase נפתולי אלהים is unclear, it does seem that a non-moral, metaphorical meaning is also being engaged here, i.e. to struggle in opposition to someone/something. Thus in Psalm 18, God reciprocates with those who are crooked by twisting or wrestling with them, that is, contending against them and their ways. This avoids associating an immoral action with YHWH, which would have been communicated with the hithpael form of עקש.

There is a parallel to this asymmetrical word-play in 1 Sam 2.30, which also alters the root in the negative divine response: כי־מכבדי אכבד ובזי יקלו. Similar to the word-play on the double-meaning of פתל in Psalm 18, the two verbs in the antithetical pair are connected by the meaning of 'hold in contempt', or 'despise', although קלל has the primary sense of 'slightness'. Thus the image of being made slight is the divine 'reward' for despising God, and is contrasted with the latent, non-figurative sense of כבד as 'heaviness', illustrating the opposite of honour as 'lightness'. Like Psalm 18, the alternative verb avoids attributing the (perhaps unseemly?) action of 'despising' to God.

It is important to make a distinction between what we find in v. 27 and Klaus Koch's notion of retribution as 'die Schicksalwirkende Tatsphäre', which has clearly influenced Kraus's comments on this verse.[29] The psalmist is not referring to an impersonal system (albeit grounded in an understanding of God's will), such as that found in Prov 11 (vv. 5–6, 17–20). Going beyond that, the psalmist is saying rather that in terms of their relationship with God, humans reap the consequent divine action that mirrors their own in terms of faithfulness, but will meet opposition if they act crookedly or deceitfully. God's character is painted in a similar light to human behaviour in order to make God's justice intelligible:

---

[28] Deut 32.4–6 inverts the motif of divine recompense pictured in Ps 18, emphasizing the reciprocal nature of Israel's relationship with God.

[29] Koch 1955, cf. Kraus 1993: 263.

God's relationships with humans are stamped with integrity, that is, God deals with people appropriately. The root repetition serves to emphasize the reciprocity of the relationship.[30] The psalmist is not just saying that humans 'reap what they sow', as if there is an abstract 'karmic' force governing the cosmos, it is much more immediate and personal.

The principle of equal retribution is not unknown in the ancient Near East (cf. Hammurabi §§ 2, 3–4; the Sumerian laws of Lipit-Ishtar §25; the laws of Ur-Nammu §16).[31] The law of talion 'provides that the injury inflicted upon the guilty party be the same as the injury that he inflicted upon the victim' (cf. Exod 21.23–25; Lev 24.19–20; Deut 19.21).[32] There is an intriguing parallel to this verse in a Babylonian hymn: 'Dem Treuen bin ich treu, den Untreuen bin ich untreu'.[33] A similar idea with root repetition and word-play is found in a single phrase in Prov 3.34, also in the context of divine justice: אם ללצים הוא־יליץ (cf. also the play on קבע in Prov 22.23).[34] These examples share the focus in Psalm 18, that one's actions are directly mirrored, and the consequences authored, by YHWH.

The use of *lex talionis* in prophetic literature (particularly in Amos, the oracles of Isaiah of Jerusalem, and Nahum) to legitimate military acts against other nations has recently been explored by Carly Crouch, in the context of her study of the ethics of warfare in the ancient Near East.[35] The royal military ideology evident in the Psalms (and also in the books of Kings and Chronicles), as in Assyrian literature, is characterized by a focus on the king as 'the conduit for divine-human synergy towards the maintenance of order'.[36] In Amos, expressing the 'ethics of the non-elite', the king is absent from the moral framework, and it seems to be grounded instead in *lex talionis*.[37] What is interesting about the declaration of talionic justice in Psalm 18 is therefore that it presents these two alternative ideological frameworks side-by-side. Crouch argues that a development in Judahite and Israelite ethics can be traced through Isaiah and Nahum,

[30] Cf. Chisholm 1983: 216.
[31] Frymer-Kensky 1980: 231.
[32] Frymer-Kensky 1980: 232; cf. Hammurabi § 116, 196, 197, 200, 210, 230–1.
[33] Jastrow 1905–12, 2.i: 49, no. 6 (= II, 48–49, from the Berlin collection), cit. in Gunkel 1926: 64.
[34] BHS suggests the emendation עם לצים on the basis of Ps 18.27 (see Macintosh 2011: 479–492).
[35] Crouch 2009.
[36] Crouch 2009: 116.
[37] Crouch 2009: 97–116.

in which the *lex talionis* was merged with the cosmological framework of the royal military ideology.[38] This also seems to be represented in Ps 18: YHWH's response to the king and actions on his behalf are framed and justified in terms of the concept of *lex talionis*.

Verse 28

כִּי־אַתָּה עַם־עָנִי תוֹשִׁיעַ	*For it is you who deliver a humble nation*
וְעֵינַיִם רָמוֹת תַּשְׁפִּיל	*And bring down haughty eyes*

The כי at the beginning of this verse suggests that it functions as a testimony to YHWH's justice in the previous two verses, thus integrating vv. 26–27 more fully into the rest of the psalm by interpreting the humble as those who are חסיד, תמים and גבר. Rather than mirroring the same pattern, however ('you are humble with the humble'), the idea of 'just deserts' is expressed through the image of reversal. This continues the antithetical pattern of v. 27 while simultaneously weaving in the spatial theme which pervades the psalm and which will dominate the second half of the psalm. Like the king, the humble / oppressed are delivered (i.e. to a high place), while the haughty / powerful are brought low, like the king's enemies (anticipating vv. 39–40).

ישע (hi.) makes a clear lexical connection with the king's deliverance and victories celebrated in the psalm (ישע / ישועה vv. 3, 47, 51), confirming that YHWH has acted in accordance with his usual way of acting, before elaborating on YHWH's specific help and relationship to the psalmist in the following verses.[39] In the parallel line, שפל reflects back on ישע spatially and adds the connotation of 'raising up' the humble to its meaning of saving help (cf. Pss 72.4; 116.6 and Job 5.11).[40] This provides another dimension to the psalm's spatial co-ordinates, allowing the reader to identify the one who is delivered to safety (in the first half) and the one who is granted military victories (in the second half) as the one who is humble.

עם is used in the HB to describe a people or nation, people in general, or smaller groups of people, such as troops or kin. While עם־עני could have the meaning of 'people (in general) who are humble', it seems more likely

[38] Crouch 2009: 156–173.

[39] This type of declaration frequently occurs at the end of a psalm (or section) of declarative praise (cf. Pss 34.22; 138.8 (Westermann 1966: 111).

[40] Cf. e.g. רום (hi.) 1 Sam 2.8; Pss 75.8; 113.7; קום (hi.) 1 Sam 2.8; Ps 113.7.

that this is a reference to a nation or a specific group of people rather than to people in general.[41] When עם occurs with an adjective, it most often refers to a nation, and occasionally describes a particular group of people,[42] whereas when people in general are described by a particular adjective, it is common for the adjective to appear with the definite article as a noun (e.g. Ps 68.11 לעני 'for the needy'; Isa 25.4 הדל 'the poor').

עם־עני is often regarded as a self-referential term for a group of the faithful / humble within the post-exilic community, akin to the חסידים 'righteous' and ענוים / עניים 'humble'.[43] The occurrence of עם elsewhere in collocation with עני / עניים indicates that the self-designation of a distinctive group within Israel (or of Israel vis-à-vis its neighbours) as 'humble' and 'faithful' developed out of a concrete experience of oppression and affliction.[44] However, the particular expression עם־עני only occurs elsewhere in Zeph 3.12, in contrast with the proud (v. 11) who will be removed from their midst.[45]

Although עני is used with both a literal and a figurative sense in a variety of different contexts,[46] in this verse it seems reasonable to understand עם־עני in opposition to עינים רמות, thus expressing an attitude of humility rather than the afflicted or economically destitute. The afflicted or humble are frequently contrasted with the proud or haughty in the Psalms (e.g. Pss 10; 12; 25; 89), and there is often a close (although not always synonymous) relationship between the humble and righteous / upright on one hand and the proud and wicked on the other.[47] The expressions 'eyes of pride' or 'haughty eyes' convey something of a person's character and attitude towards God. They belong to the wicked (Prov 21.4) and to foreign kings (Isa 10.12, cf. 2 Kgs 19.22 = Isa 37.23) and leaders (Isa 2.11), who despise rather than trust in YHWH and rely instead on themselves and on their own strength (Ps 12.5), and those who believe that victory is a result of their own achievement (cf. Deut 32.27). YHWH hates עינים רמות (Prov 6.17, cf. Ps 101.5) and they are humbled by him (Isa 5.15, cf. Prov

---

41 Cf. Mowinckel 1962a: 2. 91.

42 E.g. Deut 2.10; 1 Kgs 3.9; Isa 25.3; in contrast with e.g. Num 20.20; Zeph 3.12.

43 Cf. Isa 14.32; Zeph 2.3; Ps 37.11–12.

44 Cf. Isa 3.15; 14.32; 49.13 and 51.21–2.

45 On the basis of this occurrence, Hossfeld and Zenger identify Ps 18.26–32 as a post-exilic "Armentheologie" redaction by those who considered themselves to be the pure remnant of Israel (Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 120).

46 See Croft 1987, ch. 2; Mowinckel 1962a, 2: 91.

47 E.g. Pss 14.5–6; 25.16; 31.24; 34.7–8.

29.23). A similar conceptual association of godlessness with self-reliance is expressed several times in Assyrian literature.[48]

שפל (hi.) occurs in contexts where pride is the cause or reason for 'being brought down', i.e. humiliated (e.g. Isa 2.11; 5.15; 13.11; Job 22.29), often with the meaning of military defeat (Isa 25.11–12; 26.5–6) or loss of political control (Ezek 17.14; 29.14–15). In the context of Psalm 18, it declares that those who are in a position of power, oppressing the עם־עני and not trusting in YHWH—and therefore full of pride in their own strength—get their just deserts (cf. Ps 31.24–25). The fact that שפל (hi.) can also carry this military or political sense of being brought down enables this double level of meaning, whereby it fits with both the specific narrative of the psalm and more general contexts.

Keel refers to v. 28 as a 'sovereignty formula' which occurs frequently 'in contexts explicitly concerned with life and death, such as birth . . . and war' (e.g. Deut 32.39; 1 Sam 2.6; Ps 113.7–8).[49] The emphasis in all of these texts is on God as the supreme judge, who has ultimate control over human destiny (cf. Ps 75.8; 147.6).[50] The emphasis on YHWH's role as judge alongside his role as warrior and the implications of this for the Davidic king is perhaps the main distinctive contribution that vv. 21–30 make to the psalm. The divine roles of judge and warrior seem to be intertwined to such an extent that it is often difficult to define the beginning of one and the end of the other.[51]

Verse 29

For it is you who light my lamp, O YHWH[52]	כִּי־אַתָּה תָּאִיר נֵרִי יְהוָה
My God, you illuminate my darkness	אֱלֹהַי יַגִּיהַּ חָשְׁכִּי
For you are my lamp, O YHWH,	2 Sam 22 כִּי־אַתָּה נִירִי יְהוָה
YHWH illuminates my darkness	וַיהוָה יַגִּיהַּ חָשְׁכִּי

This verse returns to the psalmist's own experience of God's just action towards him. Verses 29–30 are connected formally with the previous verse by a declaratory כי and the emphatic repetition of כי־אתה. In Chapter 2

48 Nin A i 1–ii 11 (Nissinen 2003: 138–9); cf. also 'Broken Prism A', *ANET* 287.

49 Keel 1978: 219.

50 This is further supported by statements of incomparability in all of these literary contexts (Deut 32.39; 1 Sam 2.2; Ps 113.5, cf. Ps 18.32).

51 Cf. Ishtar's action as judge and her role as a warrior (*ANET* 384).

52 I have followed the delimitation suggested by Sanders (2000: 302), supported by the delimitation in 2 Sam 22 and the LXX manuscripts.

this verse was discussed in relation to the 'lamp metaphor', and the frequent (incorrect) assumption that 'lamp' is simply a substitute for 'life'.[53] A lamp can indeed function as a symbol for life (e.g. 1 Kgs 11.36; 15.4; 2 Sam 14.7),[54] and, conversely, the expression 'to have one's lamp extinguished', is used in a variety of biblical texts in contexts of dying or killing (e.g. Isa 43.17; Job 21.17). However, light and darkness should not be regarded as discrete symbols that need 'de-coding'. Both 'lamp' and 'light' also occur frequently in metaphors expressing God's presence and protection, many of which have close associations with divine salvation and help.[55]

The emphatic אתה at the beginning of the verse suggests that it is the king's choice of YHWH as the source of his light that is significant.[56] A related semantic co-ordinate in the image-field is the word-picture in Isa 50.10–11 of 'lighting your own torches' (i.e. relying on your own devices and strength) in contrast to trusting in God for help. Confirming the semantic association of lamp with trust, and that a lamp is a personal and intimate symbol of light, are 'names of trust and confidence' containing נר (e.g. 'Abner' and 'Neriah').[57] The first word-picture in this verse is thus primarily a declaration of trust in YHWH as the source of his guidance, strength, and protection.

To fully understand the meaning of this metaphor, it must be read alongside its partner in the second half of the verse, which focuses on the *function* of the lamp. Having a lamp in the darkness illuminates one's path and prevents one from getting lost or stumbling and falling;[58] it offers protection and guidance, and has the power to dispel fear (cf. Job 29.2–3).[59] The second metaphor thus adds more colour and shape to the first: the result of this relationship of trust is a reward in terms of a 'lightening' of his darkness. When in darkness—a situation of need, vulnerability, and danger, the king trusts in YHWH for help, and he comes to the king's aid

---

53 Brettler (1989: 45), "life-force", and Keel, "you grant me a happy life" (1978: 188).

54 Aalen 1979: 160.

55 E.g. 2 Sam 22.29; Isa 10.17; 49.6; Job 29.2–3; Pss 4.6; 27.1.

56 The emphatic use of אתה is found in contexts of deliverance in an overwhelming number of psalms, with an emphasis on trust in YHWH and choosing YHWH as a refuge (cf. e.g. Pss 3.4; 5.13; 12.8).

57 Noth 1980: 167f. (cit. in Kellerman 1999: 19).

58 Note the antithetical parallelism between נרי and חשכי.

59 Cf. King 2012: 299ff.

by providing the light he needs—his reassuring presence, strength, and victory (cf. the oracle of Ishtar to Esarhaddon).[60]

To pass over these two metaphors as synonymous parallelism therefore misunderstands their focus and their function. The former allows the poet to convey the source of the king's strength and the object of his trust, while the latter forges a connection with the beginning of the psalm and also of the theophany, reminding us of the chaotic forces of death and darkness from which the king was rescued, and declaring that YHWH is the one who has dominion over darkness (v. 13).[61] The king's own experience of God's justice and faithfulness is therefore that he has been rescued from darkness and rewarded with victory and power precisely because he trusted in God as the source of his strength. 2 Samuel 22 omits the verb here, giving a more direct expression 'you are my lamp', which emphasizes even more strongly the connection between YHWH's presence and the king's experience of strength.

Verse 30

For with you I can charge at a whole troop	כִּי־בְךָ אָרֻץ גְּדוּד
And with my God I can leap over a wall	וּבֵאלֹהַי אֲדַלֶּג־שׁוּר

This verse declares what YHWH's strong presence enables the king to do. רוץ (qal) is frequently used to describe fast running,[62] but also occurs in military contexts to denote 'charging' in battle.[63] The object, גדוד, can denote a troop or a raiding party.[64] Although transitive uses of the verb in such contexts tend to be followed by a preposition (e.g. Job 15.26; 16.14; Dan 8.6), there is an elliptical form in both 1 Sam 17.22 and 48, where it is simply followed by the acc. (המערכה in both cases). Although the context is slightly different, a similar idea is communicated. In spite of this, the

[60] SAA 9 1.6 (Nissinen 2003: 107).

[61] It is unlikely that v. 29 is a direct reference to the brightness of YHWH's flaming presence that characterizes his approach to battle (*contra* Adam 2001: 144). Adam's connection between the theophanic splendour of YHWH and the divine equipping of the king by means of an ethical explanation is rather forced and obscures the main focus of the verse's metaphors by confusing and merging two very different images of light.

[62] E.g. Job 9.25; Ps 147.15; Prov 4.11–12; Song 1.4.

[63] E.g. Josh 8.19; Joel 2.4, 7, 9; Job 15.25–6; 16.14; Dan 8.6; cf. also 1 Sam 17.48; Ps 59.5[4].

[64] E.g. Gen 49.19; 2 Sam 3.22; 4.2; 2 Kgs 6.23; 13.20; Job 19.12.

elliptical phrase ארץ גדוד has caused some difficulties, even for some of the ancient translators.[65]

An alternative interpretation is based on similarities between Ps 18.30, 38 and the narrative in 1 Sam 30.8–20, in which David defeats an Amalekite raiding party. David asks YHWH: אֶרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵי הַגְּדוּד־הַזֶּה הַאַשִּׂגֶנּוּ *'Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?'* (v. 8)—strikingly similar to the report in Ps 18.38: אֶרְדּוֹף אוֹיְבַי וְאַשִּׂיגֵם. This argument is strengthened by the occurrence of אחרי רוץ in 2 Sam 18.22. However, ארץ could equally be an elliptical expression for ארץ על 'to attack' as for ארץ אחרי 'to pursue'.[66]

This claim of boldness and strength is followed by a hyperbolic word-picture of the psalmist leaping over a city wall. The proposal to amend גדוד to גדר 'wall', i.e. 'to storm a wall / rampart', based on LXX^{L} 2 Sam 22.30 (πεφραγμένος) provides a neat parallel to the second word-picture in the verse.[67] However, in support of the MT, there is a loose conceptual parallel in Joel 2:7, where attacking and scaling a wall are juxtaposed, 'Like warriors they charge (רוץ), like soldiers they scale (עלה) the wall'.[68]

While דלג is not used elsewhere in the context of invading enemy walls, its meaning is clear enough. The image seems to be of an animal springing over a wall with ease (cf. Isa 35.6; Song 2.8–9), anticipating the deer imagery in v. 34. The same verb describes a marauding band that 'leaps from city to city' (Sir 37.26).[69] Defensive city walls are usually impassable obstacles which have to be scaled (Joel 2.7) or destroyed (2 Sam 20.15; 2 Kgs 14.13) before an army can capture the city. This metaphor portrays the king effortlessly surmounting this challenge, sailing over

---

[65] The LXX translation ὅτι ἐν σοὶ ῥυσθήσομαι ἀπὸ πειρατηρίου 'I will be delivered from a troop' makes sense of the verse in its context but seems to presuppose a verb other than that presented in MT, cf. Vg. *eripiar a temptatione*—reading πειρασμός for πειρατηρίον 'I will be delivered from temptation'. Various textual emendations have been proposed, e.g. אָרַץ (hi.) 'to put to flight' instead of אָרֵץ cf. Jer 49.19 and 50.44 (Fleet 1930–31: 526, cit. in Chisholm 1983: 227, n. 6), although the text in 2 Sam 22 (ארוץ) makes this proposal unlikely. The emendation to רצץ 'crush' (*NRSV*; BDH 930a; Delitzsch 1984: I, 262) is also unlikely as רצץ is not found elsewhere in the context of military victory.

[66] Cf. *Midr. Teh* XVIII 31 264–5, cit. in Slomovic 1979: 368.

[67] Cf. Gunkel 1926: 71; Kraus 1993: 253; Seybold 1996: 79; Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 124; *NJB*; *NJPS*; Maiberger 2004: 419. For an Assyrian parallel to this image, see *ARAB* 2: 84, §157.

[68] The fanciful suggestion by Guillaume (2010:38) that the terms גדוד and שור both refer to a bullock is untenable. His identification of a ritual of bull-leaping, supported by iconographical images (ibid. 39–45), has nothing to do with the context of this verse in the psalm.

[69] Levi 1904: 39 (cit in Chisholm 1983: 229, n. 6).

the wall. Chisholm sums up the purpose of the hyperbolic language well: 'Like others in the ancient Near East, he is emphasising the total military superiority which his God gives him. This, in turn, becomes a powerful assertion of the deity's faithfulness and incomparability'.[70]

Interpretation: vv. 26–30

This strophe boldly declares YHWH's justice in the arena of ethical behaviour and its consequences. It is linked thematically to the previous strophe's focus on the psalmist's righteousness and YHWH's justice towards him in terms of reward, and progresses to a general statement about YHWH's dealings with the humble and proud, before turning to the psalmist's personal experience of the out-workings of YHWH's justice. This neatly draws the section back to the subject of the psalmist's deliverance, preparing the way for a description of his military victory in the second half of the psalm.[71]

The idea of military success as divine reward for faithfulness, moral obedience and justice is found in a wide variety of ancient Near Eastern texts.[72] One of the most striking conceptual parallels to this section can be found in Sargon's letter to Ashur (dated 714 BC), in which he makes a lengthy appeal to his god for help in battle, declaring his careful observance of divine law, how he has guarded justice and rejected evil. Sargon contrasts his own behaviour with that of his enemy, 'Ursâ, the Armenian, who does not respect (*lit*., guard) the word of Assur and Marduk . . . without judgement, whose speech was evil'.[73] He goes on to declare his own righteousness in terms that strongly resonate with Ps 18.22–24:

> I, Sargon . . . who carefully observes the law of Shamash . . . who waits reverently upon the word of the great gods, never violating their ordinances . . .[74]

---

[70] Chisholm 1983: 230.

[71] Adam's suggestion that this section highlights the role of justice given to the king seems unwarranted. The emphasis here is specifically on moral conduct in relation to obedience of God's laws, and on *God's* justice and righteousness, rather than on the king's exercise of justice (cf. Pss 15.2; 45.8).

[72] E.g. the prayer of Ramses II to Amun (Erman 1927: 263–4); the Barrakab inscriptions (Gibson 1975: 78–79, lines 1–2; 80–81, line 11; 89–90, lines 4–7; the description of Ashurnasipal (*ARAB* 1: 185 §509); cf. the Bisutun inscription of King Darius I (cit. in Gunkel 1926: 64).

[73] *ARAB* 2: 79, §152.

[74] *ARAB* 2: 80 §153.

The section which follows is remarkably similar to vv. 26–28. Sargon continues to praise Assur for his dominion and might, reminding him of his justice and how he deals with those who do not trust in him for strength. He declares how Assur has humbled princes; how those who trust and boast in their own might rather than fearing his name will be punished in battle, and how their forces will be scattered to the wind. In contrast, 'the one who observes the law of the gods, who trusts in the gracious justice of Shamash, and fears the godhead of Assur and Enlil, who does not despise the weak', this one Assur will cause 'to walk at his side', and will make him 'stand in triumph (might)' over his enemies.[75] Sargon proceeds to report the outcome of this declaration: 'Assur, my lord, heard my words of righteous (indignation), they pleased him and he inclined to hear (*lit.*, turned toward) my just prayer. He granted my request. He sent at my side his terrible weapons'.[76] There follows an account of the battle.

It is not my intention to make any claims for literary dependence but simply to observe that this constellation of themes (the king's moral behaviour, observance of divine laws, the king's choice to trust in his god for strength, and military victory), was not uncommon in ancient Near Eastern literature, particularly texts narrating military accomplishments.[77] If Psalm 18 is considered to be a royal thanksgiving hymn, this helps to put into context the apparently incongruous display of self-righteousness in vv. 21–25, without needing to 'explain it away' either as a later deuteronomistic interpolation[78] or by associating it with a ritual humiliation.[79] In the context of an ancient Near Eastern royal victory thanksgiving song, it would not be out of place for a king to affirm his righteousness before God and his loyalty to the commandments. Furthermore, it seems that the identification of the enemy as those who are opposed to moral order played an important role in legitimising the king's military actions.

---

[75] *ARAB* 2: 81, §153.

[76] *ARAB* 2: 81 §154.

[77] The above letter by Sargon is thought to have been used as part of a ceremony to commemorate those who died in battle (*ARAB* 2: 99, n. 1).

[78] Cf. Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 120–121.

[79] Cf. Johnson (1967: 106 n. 2, 110).

CHAPTER SEVEN

TRANSLATION AND EXEGESIS OF PSALM 18.31–37

There is another change in mood and tone at this point in the psalm. Verses 31–32 are Janus-like, functioning both as a conclusion to the central section on God's justice, and as an introduction to the thanksgiving hymn which follows.

Words and Pictures in Verses 31–37

Verse 31

This God—his way is perfect	הָאֵל תָּמִים דַּרְכּוֹ
The word of YHWH is pure	אִמְרַת־יְהוָה צְרוּפָה
He is a shield for all who seek refuge in him	מָגֵן הוּא לְכֹל הַחֹסִים בּוֹ

This verse with its three powerful word-pictures is pivotal to the message of the psalm. It reverberates with the psalm's key themes of YHWH's trustworthiness and faithfulness to those who trust in him, relating primarily to vv. 26–7 through word-play on דרך and תמים, and also to vv. 21–25. It also reintroduces the powerful symbol of the shield (מגן), reminding us of the psalmist's opening declarations of trust in YHWH in v. 3, repeated again in v. 36. האל 'this God' (cf. vv. 33 and 48) here begins an emphatic *casus pendens* clause, marking the abrupt change from 2nd to 3rd person address. Labuschagne argues that the definite article here (originally a demonstrative particle and in some cases retaining a weak demonstrative force)[1] expresses God's incomparability and uniqueness, carrying the force of 'this very one, this particular one'.[2]

The first word-picture introduces God's 'way'. If one 'foregrounds' the legal overtones in light of the previous section (vv. 21–30), דרך could mean 'moral administration', i.e. referring directly back to God's dealings with people.[3] Alternatively, God's 'way' has been understood as his *deeds* of protection, salvation and blessing, in the light of several texts which

[1] See e.g. Joüon and Muraoka 1993: II 506 (f).
[2] Labuschagne 1966: 121 n. 2; cf. Seybold 1996: 77.
[3] Cf. BDB 204.

associate 'way' with 'work', particularly salvific 'works' (e.g. Pss 67.3; 77.14; 103.7).[4] The parallel with Deut 32.4 ('his works are perfect תמים and all his ways are just משפט') is frequently mentioned in association with this verse. However, דרך is singular in Psalm 18, creating a slightly different metaphorical picture of God's justice: the singular 'way' or 'path' encompasses the broadest notions of God's 'behaviour' or the way in which he proceeds. That his way is perfect or blameless speaks of God's justice in an absolute way and does not necessarily need to be defined in the context of either moral administration or saving works.

The second word-picture paints the trustworthiness of God's promises. While אמרה clearly has semantic associations with teaching, Torah and covenant elsewhere (e.g. Deut 32.2; Ps 119.11), in this psalm it seems to have the nuance of promise (cf. Ps 119.38).[5] This sense is supported by oracles of salvation and victory in narrative texts, for example the prayer of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chr 20. 5–12 is followed by an oracle of victory from YHWH given through Jahaziel (vv. 14–17).[6] In other ancient Near Eastern salvation oracles, there are similar promises of protection and success in battle.[7]

However, it is difficult to find a translation that does justice to the focus of the word-picture. צרופה in the HB frequently expresses divine testing and trials in terms of a precious metal being purified or refined by fire (e.g. Isa 1.25; Jer 9.6; Zech 13.9; Ps 66.10), and this process of refining often dominates in the translation of צרופה in this verse, e.g. τὰ λόγια κυρίου πεπυρωμένα (LXX); 'the word of YHWH is refined in the furnace' (*NJB*); 'Das Wort des Herrn ist im Feuer geläutert' (Hossfeld and Zenger), etc.[8] Such translations suggest that there is a corresponding 'process' of refining in terms of what makes God's word pure, evident in the following translations: 'the promise/word of the Lord proves true' (*ESV*; *NRSV*); 'the word of the Lord is proven' (*NKJV*). The idea that experience 'proves' the purity of his word is misleading. The proper focus of the metaphor is the purity of the metal that *results* from refining, not the process, cf. 'the word of the Lord is flawless' (*NIV*); 'the word of the Lord is pure' (*NJPS*);

---

[4] Chisholm 1983: 237.

[5] The term אמרה occurs only in poetic literature and overwhelmingly in the Psalms, particularly in Ps 119. It appears several times in a construct relationship with divine names (e.g. Isa 5.24; Ps 105.19).

[6] Cf. also 1 Sam 23.2, 4; 30.8; 2 Sam 5.19.

[7] E.g. Ishtar's assurance to Esarhaddon (SAA 9 1.6, Nissinen 2003: 107); the report of Shalmaneser III (*ANET* 277).

[8] Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 124.

'the Lord's utterance is free from blemish' (Craigie); 'Das Wort YHWHs ist lauter' (Seybold). A comparable metaphor which elaborates on the sense of צרופה is found in Ps 12.7, which describes YHWH's promises as the purest silver. God's word, or promise, is unalloyed—utterly without impurity. Here, the notion of a metal's purity 'maps' onto the reliability and trustworthiness of God's promise, i.e. there is no falsehood in his word.[9] An almost identical saying is found in Prov 30.5.[10]

The final image in this verse takes us back to the psalmist's introductory declaration of trust, and develops the themes of seeking refuge and moral uprightness.[11] Here YHWH is affirmed as the one who defends those who trust in him, demonstrating the reliability of his word. In the light of the previous verses, this powerful image of God as a protective shield declares that refuge, protection and salvation are available to those who trust in YHWH.[12] What is interesting and fresh about the word-picture here is the use of חסה, which the psalmist has previously associated with 'rock' (v. 3). The impact of this verb is to superimpose or 'telescope' the images of shield and rock through their functions of protection and refuge and the association of trust that they both share.[13] When each term recurs again, they are both closely associated with salvation (vv. 36 and 47).

Verse 32

כִּי מִי אֱלוֹהַּ מִבַּלְעֲדֵי יְהוָה	*For who is God but YHWH?*
וּמִי צוּר זוּלָתִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ	*And who is a rock but our God?*

Increasing the energy and volume of the previous verse, the psalmist sings out two powerful rhetorical questions, with the implicit response, 'None! There is no other god but YHWH, and there is no other rock but YHWH!' Like the previous verse, this one also resonates with the beginning of the psalm, through the image of the 'rock' (v. 3). For the first time אלהים is

[9] Cf. Ishtar's oracle to Esarhaddon (SAA 9 1.10, Nissinen 2003: 110).

[10] It is possible either that Prov 30.5–6 were added by a later redactor, in response to the cynical wisdom of the preceding verses, or that Ps 18.31 and Prov 30.5 are a redaction by the same hand.

[11] Cf. Pss 144.2. These associations can be clearly seen elsewhere in the Psalter (e.g. Pss 7.11; 84.12–13; cf. Prov 2.7.

[12] Cf. Ps 119.114.

[13] A similar metaphorical interplay can be seen in Deut 32.37–8, between צור and סתר.

used with the 1st person pl. suffix, including the congregation in a collective declaration.[14]

אלוה is the least common word for God in the HB, and in a number of texts appears to be associated with the uniqueness of YHWH (e.g. Deut 32.15; Neh 9.17). A similar expression to this verse occurs in Hannah's song (1 Sam 2.2) with אלהים rather than אלוה (cf. 2 Sam 22.32, which has אל), and, like Psalm 18, this declaration of incomparability is set in the context of salvation and victory (1 Sam 2.1). The parallelism between אלוה and צור is found in two other texts in the HB, both concerned with the worship of YHWH rather than other gods (Deut 32.15; Isa 44.8).

The particles בלעדי 'apart from' / 'except' and זולה 'except' / 'besides' are found in several statements of incomparability alongside affirmations of YHWH as saviour (e.g. Hos 13.4; Isa 26.13; 43.11).[15] Later in the psalm (v. 42), this connection between incomparability and salvation is demonstrated in the contrast between the psalmist and his enemies: while his cries are heard and mightily answered by YHWH, his enemies cry in vain for there is no one to save them (ואין־מושיע) and YHWH does not listen to them. Not only is YHWH the God in whom the psalmist seeks refuge, he is the only god who *is* a rock. No other god even deserves the title (cf. Isa 44.8 and Deut 32.31, 37, where other gods are referred to as 'rocks' in contrast to '*the* Rock'). Divine incomparability is a common theme in ancient Near Eastern hymns. The Sumerian goddess Ishtar is praised in a hymn for her incomparable greatness, and, in a prayer of lamentation, for her unequalled strength in battle.[16] Incomparability was also expressed in personal names, e.g. the Hebrew names Micaiah / Micah, Michael, the Assyrian names *Mannu-kī-Adad* 'who is like Adad?', *Mannu-kīma-Ellil-ḫātin* 'Who protects as Enlil?'[17]

A closer look at the names for God throughout the psalm reveals that the lexemes occur in five consecutive verses from vv. 29–33 and only five times elsewhere (vv. 3, 7, 22, 47 and 48). The concentration of אלהים / אל / אלוה in this central section focuses our attention on YHWH as *the* God. YHWH is the only God whose word is utterly trustworthy, who is able to save, and who offers protection.

---

[14] Cf. Deut 32.3–4 and 1 Sam 2.2 where it seems to have a didactic purpose, i.e. to include the 'audience' in the declarative praise (Chisholm 1983: 245).

[15] Cf. Labuschagne 1966: 133.

[16] *ANET* 383, 384.

[17] Tallqvist 1914: 126.

Verse 33

It is God who girds me with strength	הָאֵל הַמְאַזְּרֵנִי חָיִל
and makes my way perfect	וַיִּתֵּן תָּמִים דַּרְכִּי
God is my strong refuge	2 Sam 22 הָאֵל מָעוּזִּי [18] חָיִל
he has freed up my path to be perfect[19]	וַיַּתֵּר תָּמִים דַּרְכּוֹ

God is praised specifically for the psalmist's experience of help in battle, which dominates the rest of the psalm. The temporal ambiguity of the three participles in vv. 33–35 means that they can be interpreted as a narration of a particular event in the past, or as a continuation of general statements about YHWH's actions on behalf of the king.[20] If the ambiguity is deliberate, it serves to encompass the universal and the particular, the many experiences of rescue, deliverance and triumph and the one specific occasion of battle victory. The participles connect the two temporal lenses that oscillate within the psalm—this God is the one *who does* and *has done* all these things.

The emphatic repetition of האל serves to reinforce the connection between the God of justice and the God of salvation: it is the true God, YHWH, whose way is perfect, who girds me with strength (cf. Isa 45.5). חיל המאזרני, a phrase which is repeated in v. 40, paints a vivid picture of God preparing the king for battle, clothing him with strength (cf. 1 Sam 2.4). The image-field involving the action of 'girding' sheds further light on the meaning of the word-picture here. אזר occurs frequently in the expression

---

[18] 2 Sam 22 מעוזי is an odd textual variant; it appears to be a standard epithet (cf. Ps 31.3) but its collocation with חיל is grammatically strange. 4QSam[a], LXX[L], Syr. and Vg. all follow Ps 18. While the idea of God as a strong tower resonates with v. 31 and the string of epithets at the beginning of the psalm (v. 3), the two word pictures here in 2 Sam 22.33 seem quite dissonant: the first depicts God as a static source of strength and protection, while the second is a more active depiction of God clearing the king's path so that it is free of obstacles.

[19] This translation understands the verb נתר II 'to free / loose' in the sense of YHWH clearing a pathway for the king (cf. LXX ἐξετίναξεν 'to shake off', i.e. to clear). Hatch and Redpath (443) attribute the LXX translation to the Hebrew root תור hi. 'to seek/spy out, explore', in the sense of a reconnaissance (cf. Judg 1.23), which could also fit here, although the former root makes more sense in the context of clearing a pathway. The majority of translators follow the *lectio facilior* in Ps 18, but the 2 Sam 22 reading is probably the earlier, which was changed into a more familiar verb by a later hand. Gunkel (1926: 71) suggests ויתר is a corruption of ואתר "Ich sprang unverkehrt meinen Weg" from נתר I 'to spring up', which is possible, but does not fit so well in the context, and there is no need for it, as the focus is on God's actions on his behalf.

[20] For conflicting discussions of the variety of verbal forms and their meaning / significance in Ps 18, see Cross and Freedman 1953: 19–20; Longacre 2006; and Robar 2013: 122–127.

'to gird the loins', which is used in a figurative sense to describe equipping oneself for a particular task. This metaphorical usage stems from the preparation for a journey (e.g. 2 Kgs 4.29) or for battle. Before battle, a warrior would cover his genitals by wrapping a garment between his legs and around his waist, and would also wear some sort of belt around his waist to carry a weapon (e.g. 2, חגורה Kgs 3.21).[21] The occurrences of this expression in Jeremiah and Job are particularly interesting (e.g. Jer 1.17; Job 38.3; 40.7), as they involve confrontation (Jeremiah in speaking to the people and Job in speaking to God), and imply that both courage and power are needed.

The action of 'girding' more generally is similar to that of clothing or wrapping something around oneself. In Ps 30.12 God girds the psalmist with joy instead of sackcloth, and in Ps 93.1 God himself is described as girded with strength (אזר htp.), in the context of celebrating YHWH's kingship and majesty.[22] In parallel with לבש this creates the image of being clothed in strength like a garment. Indeed, Targum Psalm 18 adds היד קמור 'as a belt' in its rendering of this verse.[23]

In a study of biblical depictions of radiance, Shawn Aster observes that there is a wide variety of biblical idioms involving being clothed in a positive abstract concept such as strength, salvation, royalty, or in a negative one such as shame (e.g. Isa 59.17; Pss 35.26; 93.1).[24] Aster seems content to explain the symbolism of the metaphorical clothing as 'exhibiting' the particular concept in each word-picture, i.e. the person who is 'clothed in strength' is exhibiting strength to others. While the aspect of displaying something is present in some cases, not all the concepts listed above can be so tightly defined. In some contexts, the metaphorical clothing represents a personal quality or characteristic, in others a change in status. It seems significant that the verb in Psalm 18 is 'to be girded', implying that the king is completely surrounded and filled with divine strength, physically equipping him for battle.

חיל is used to describe a range of qualities, including physical strength and military might, and it picks up the theme of strength running throughout the psalm. This word-picture therefore develops in a more concrete way the opening declaration of the psalm: ארחמך יהוה חזקי and contrasts the king's divinely bestowed strength with the position the king

[21] Cf. Low 2011.
[22] See also Ps 65.7.
[23] Smelik and Smelik 2001: 260.
[24] Aster 2006: 198–202.

was in when faced with the 'strong enemy' of v. 18. Not only is YHWH an empowering presence, but he actually gives the king the physical strength he needs for battle.[25]

The second word-picture in this verse is inherently ambiguous because of the multiple semantic co-ordinates of דרך. However, in its primary sense it should be understood as divine provision for the king as a warrior. ויתן is usually understood here as 'make', i.e. he makes my path clear.[26] In the context of divine strength and preparation for battle, דרך תמים depicts a safe and straightforward journey into battle, free of obstacles, cf. 'er führte mich auf einen Weg ohne Hindernis'.[27] This sense of דרך as an approach to battle is also found in Num 20.17; 21.22 (cf. 1 Sam 15.20). The task of clearing the way on approach to battle features a number of times in ancient Near Eastern descriptions of military campaigns, and the accounts bear witness to the importance given to the king's ability to lead one's army across treacherous terrain.[28] The following boast of Sargon gives a glimpse of what was involved in the task of clearing pathways in battle involved, 'I opened up mighty mountains whose passes were difficult and countless, and I spied out their trails. By main force I advanced over inaccessible paths (in) steep and terrifying places'.[29] In Psalm 18, this task is completed by YHWH. The king's way into battle was made easy and straightforward.[30]

This verse concludes the sequence of word plays on תמים and דרך: the one who walks in his ways (vv. 22–24)—the one who is blameless and to whom God responds blamelessly—is given a totally obstacle-free path into battle by the one whose way is perfect. The more common sense of תמים 'perfect' has been retained in the translation here, as it is sufficiently dissonant within the word-picture to cause the reader to stop and think twice about its meaning and its relationship to the rest of the psalm. The versatility of both terms allows for this creative 'stretching' of the images in different directions and a skilful blending of different strands to make a united theological point: God sets the way that should be followed and in turn guards the way of the one who follows.

---

[25] Cf. the attribution of victory to Ashur by Ashurnasirpal (Grayson 1996: I 210).

[26] BDB 681a; Craigie 2004: 167; Seybold 1996: 77; Chisholm 1983: 246.

[27] Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 124.

[28] *ARAB* 1: 213 §596, cf. the description of Thutmose III in the Armant Stela (*ANET* 234).

[29] *ARAB* 2: 25–26 §54, cf. *ARAB* 1: 179 §498; 218–219 §604.

[30] Cf. the inscription of Narām-Sin (*ANET* 168), and Ashurnasipal's testimony to divine presence on his route to battle (*ARAB* 1: 163 §474; 177 §497). For a detailed survey of metaphors involving 'path' in biblical and other ancient Near Eastern texts, see Zehnder 1999.

Verse 34

Who sets my feet down like the feet of deer[31]	מְשַׁוֶּה רַגְלַי כְּאַיָּלוֹת
And establishes me upon my heights	וְעַל בָּמֹתַי יַעֲמִידֵנִי

The participles which begin the following two verses are grammatically dependent upon הָאֵל 'it is God who…' (v. 33).[32] Continuing the theme of God's strength, the psalmist describes how God provides for him in battle, strengthening his feet (vv. 34, 37) and his hands (v. 35). The use of מְשַׁוֶּה seems to be something of a semantic anomaly and one that is often skimmed over. It is widely translated as 'to make (like, כ)',[33] although it does not seem to carry this precise meaning anywhere else in the HB. While the uses of שוה I (qal and hi.) can express a comparative element 'to be like', 'to resemble',[34] the sense implied by the translation 'he made my feet like the feet of deer' is in fact much closer to that of /כְּ + נתן/שית/שים which occur frequently.[35] The alternative, to understand the verb as שוה II Pi. 'set, place' (BDB 1001a), is reflected in LXX 2 Kgdms 22.34 τιθεὶς (compared to LXX Ps 17.34 καταρτιζόμενος), and in the otherwise identical copy of this expression in Hab 3.19a, where the verb is שים instead of שוה. The word-picture of the king having his feet *set down* like a deer is also more congruent with the image that follows, of being established on the heights.

The agility of a deer provides a powerful image for grasping how God aids the king in battle. Deer can move about with ease and remarkable swiftness on steep and rocky terrain without stumbling. The simile points to the king's sure-footedness on steep/rough terrain, speed combined with strength, and the ability to spring over obstacles with ease (cf. Isa 35.6).[36] It may also be an intentional reminder of the deer imagery used in v. 30 to depict the king leaping over a wall. To have strength, speed and firm

---

[31] כאילות is usually expanded in translation to 'like the feet of deer', understanding a 'pregnant' use of kaph, as is found elsewhere (e.g. Isa 63.2; Jer 50.9; Lam 5.21), cf. Joüon and Muraoka 2000: II 491.

[32] Crüsemann (1969: 123–4) distinguishes the participial expressions in royal psalms (Ps 18.33–35, 48, 51, and Ps 144.1, 10) from other more general hymnic participial expressions (e.g. Amos 4.13; Jer 31.35; Job 9.5–10; Ps 113.6–8), observing that the use of אל at the beginning of a participial expression is unique to these royal psalms.

[33] E.g. *NRSV*, *KJV*, *NIV*, *NJPS*, cf. Sæbø 2004: 525.

[34] In its consonantal form משוה could also be a hi. ptc., but the two occurrences of this (Lam 2.13; Isa 46.5) have the meaning of 'to liken/compare' rather than 'to make like'.

[35] E.g. Gen 13.16; 1 Kgs 19.2; Isa 16.3; Jer 29.17 (cf. Chisholm 1983: 250 n. 1).

[36] Hossfeld and Zenger (1993: 124) 'unpack' this image in their translation here, "Er ließ mich springen schnell wie Hirsche".

footing in battle was highly prized, and there are a number of literary parallels which employ wild mountain animals to depict warriors, e.g. Asahel's swift-footedness is likened to that of a wild gazelle (2 Sam 2.18); Sennacherib describes himself as mounting dangerous mountain peaks 'like a young gazelle'.[37]

The second half of the verse could simply be understood as an extension of the simile, reinforcing the parallel between the king and the stability and agility of deer on the 'mountain heights', which is their habitation. Chisholm, who takes this view, understands the heights as 'simply a necessary prop in the figurative portrayal of the deer's agility'.[38] However, the 1st person suffix במתי suggests that we are not meant to see only the deer's mountainous home here.[39] If we look at the battle-ground imagery against the narrative of distress from vv. 5–6, the first person suffix can be understood in terms of the king's home territory: he was being oppressed on all sides, but YHWH gave him strength and established him on his battle-grounds, *his* high places, not only to defend them but to utterly crush his enemies (vv. 38ff). Against the description of battle that follows, the king's heights are also his vantage point for approach to battle.[40]

The heights of the land were fortifications which provided the king with security and they belonged to him, they were *his* heights. There are several texts which use the image of high places in different ways, but the associated conceptual connections are military might, victory, and possession of the land (cf. Isa 58.14; Hab 3.19). The heights were strategic territory in battle (cf. 1 Kgs 20.23–24), the possession of which meant dominion (cf. 2 Sam 1.19, 25).[41] The conceptual backdrop of height as safety, which was set at the beginning of the psalm, is now being merged with a scene of the heights as a place of victory and dominion.

In connection with this it is worth reflecting on the image used elsewhere in the HB of YHWH marching over the heights of the earth like a warrior into battle (e.g. Amos 4.13; Mic 1.3; the heights of the sea in Job 9.8). Cross and Freedman's reconstruction of Ps 18.34 = 2 Sam 22.34 as יעמדני<מת>על במתי 'who makes me stand on the back of death'

[37] *ARAB* 2: 122 §244.

[38] Chisholm 1983: 252.

[39] The suffix is largely ignored in the Versions. It could result from dittography, since the following word begins with a *yodh*, except that the same form also occurs in 2 Sam 22 and Hab 3.19. Dahood's suggestion that במתי is a 3 ms suffix is possible, but it ignores the context of the king defending *his* land on the high places (Dahood 1966: 115).

[40] Cf. Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 127.

[41] Cf. Chisholm 1983: 252, n. 1.

(following Albright's reconstruction of Hab 3.19 'on the back of sea') is an unnecessary conjecture, as the text makes good sense as it stands.[42] However, Moran's criticism of this seems to be slightly misplaced.[43] He argues that only YHWH treads on the heights of the earth or the sea, whereas Israel treads on the backs of its enemies (Deut 33.29). Several texts suggest that it is more nuanced than that: Deut 32.13 and Isa 58.14, along with Hab 3.19 and Ps 18.34 evoke images of God granting possession of the heights and of God's protection of, and presence with, Israel or the king.

The second part of the verse fleshes out in more detail the vision of divine empowerment celebrated in v. 33 and strengthens the image of a deer on the mountain top, strong and secure in its footing. עמד (hi.) occurs elsewhere in the Psalter in contexts of deliverance and in collocation with firm footing (Pss 31.9; 40.3). It has the sense of being set down or firmly established (like a wall, cf. Prov 29.4), and is also used in contexts of security and endurance in the establishment of Jerusalem (e.g. 1 Kgs 15.4) and of the king on the throne (e.g. 2 Chr 9.8). If we overlay this image onto the battlefield, it creates the potential for seeing both security and victory—the king is caused to stand firm against the enemy and is established as victor.[44] This image can be contrasted with a depiction of the enemy in the Battle of Kadesh: 'their legs could not stay firm, and they fled.[45]

Verse 35

Who trains my hands for battle	מְלַמֵּד יָדַי לַמִּלְחָמָה
And so my arms can draw a bow of bronze	נִחֲתָה קֶשֶׁת־נְחוּשָׁה זְרוֹעֹתָי
(*And so my arms can draw a bow of bronze*	2 Sam 22) זְרוֹעֹתָי קֶשֶׁת־נְחוּשָׁה וְנִחַת

This depiction of YHWH as the king's teacher—a military instructor training him for war (cf. Ps 144.1)—is strikingly anthropomorphic, and focuses on the intimate relationship between God and the king. The expression למד מלחמה occurs elsewhere describing the training of men for battle (e.g. in Judg 3.2; 1 Chr 5.18), whereas the predominant theological usage of למד (pi.) is for instruction in Torah (e.g. Deut 4.1, etc.) or Wisdom (e.g. Ps 25.8, etc.), rather than battle warfare. However, there is a similar

---

42 Cross and Freedman 1953: 30, n. 78, cf. Albright 1950.

43 Moran 1962: 327, n. 1.

44 Security and victory need not be presented as alternative interpretations (*contra* Ringgren 2001a: 184).

45 *CoS* II: 36 (line 203).

conceptual metaphor in Hos 7.15, which describes YHWH as having trained (יסר pi. 'discipline' / 'train') and strengthened the arms of Israel and Judah.

Arms are frequently used as a symbol of strength in the HB and are associated numerous times with military victory, particularly of God's arm in the context of deliverance.[46] Conversely, God breaks the arms of those he wants to *dis*empower (e.g. Ps 37.17; Ezek 30.22, 24–5). The same theme of divine training for battle with a specific focus on the king's arms can be observed in other ancient Near Eastern texts. In the Assyrian annals, for example, Ashurbanipal declares that the gods 'taught me to wage battle and combat . . . they made my arms powerful against my foes'.[47]

The second half of the verse is problematic and the textual variants have generated a wealth of different translations and interpretations. The following is a brief overview of three metaphorical pictures and translations that make the best sense of the text.[48] The first translation 'And my arms to bend a bow of bronze'[49] understands זרועתי 'arms' as equivalent to a collective noun with the sg. verb נחת pi. 3fs pf, 'to cause to descend', 'press down'. It is often freely translated as an infinitive, understanding זרעותי to be governed by למד.[50] The common expression דרך קשת (e.g. Isa 5.28; Jer 51.56) is regularly translated 'to bend', 'to draw' or 'to string the bow'. However, J. A. Emerton has argued convincingly that the meaning in all cases is 'to string' the bow in preparation for battle, rather than to bend the bow prior to shooting an arrow.[51]

However, the expression קשת נחושה is obscure. There is some disagreement over the kind of materials that could have been used for a bow.[52] A bow could have been decorated with metal, although this would

---

[46] Isa 59.16; 63.5; Ps 44.4, etc., cf. Ps 89.22 'my arm shall strengthen him [David]'.

[47] *ARAB* 2: 362 §934; cf. the Annals in Karnak (*ANET* 236).

[48] Reider's translation (1952: 114) "and fashions my arms into bows of brass" on the basis of Arab. *naḥata* 'fashion, shape' creates a very odd word-picture and is to be rejected, cf. McCarter "and shaped the bows of my arms" (1984: 470–1). Cross and Freedman's 're-location' of this stich (1953: 30–31 n. 79 and 81) is a creative but completely unwarranted solution.

[49] Cf. e.g. *Midr. Teh, NRSV*, *NAB*, Craigie 2004:167.

[50] Cf. Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 124 and Seybold 1996: 77. For examples of pl. nouns (of things or animals) as collectives with fem. sg. verb, see e.g. 2 Sam 24.31; Isa 34.13; Jer 4.14 (Joüon and Muraoka 1993: 553–554, §150g). The 2 Sam 22 text could be repointed to the infinitive נַחֵת.

[51] Emerton 2003: 465–486, cf. Couroyer 1981: 13–18; Barrick 1985.

[52] E.g. Driver 1960: 82. Neither a metal nor a metal-plated bow used for warfare has been found in any archaeological excavations, although bronze bows may have been used as votive offerings (Clines 1989: 495).

have made it much heavier and less pliable.[53] Some resolve the problem by omitting נחושה altogether;[54] others by looking for a different understanding of נחושה.[55] The alternative is that it is some kind of figurative expression, a metaphorical description of the strength and weight of the bow (cf. the symbolic use of bronze and iron elsewhere, e.g. Isa 48.4; Mic 4.13; Job 6.12).[56] The other occurrence of קשת נחושה in Job 20.24, in parallel with נשק ברזל 'an iron weapon', need not invalidate this figurative interpretation.[57] It is clear from other ancient Near Eastern texts that the kind of bow that the king was able to draw was significant in boasts of his physical prowess.[58] The implicit message in the psalmist's word picture is therefore that such a bow would be difficult to master but that God gave the king the expertise he needed.

The second interpretation is 'so that my arms can break a bow of bronze', understanding קשת as the subject of חתת ni. (3fs. pf.) 'to be broken/shattered', lit. 'a bow of bronze is broken by my arms' (*KJV*).[59] This reading may have been influenced by a variant 2 Samuel 22 text cited by B. Kennicott, which has וחתת, and the LXX 2 Kgdms 22 translation καὶ κατάξας τόξον χαλκοῦν ἐν βραχίονί μου. The verb חתת (qal) and cognate adj. חת are used in a military context elsewhere for the breaking of bows (1 Sam 2.4; Jer 51.56), and grammatically זרעותי can be understood as an instrumental accusative whose preposition is elided, not uncommon in poetry. The significance of the word picture here is that if the king can break the strongest kind of bow, he would be able to overcome any enemy attack.[60] However, one would expect the verb וחתה rather than the niphal form, which only occurs once elsewhere (נחת Mal 2.5). Given the num-

---

[53] de Vaux 1997: 53.

[54] LXX^{L} Ps 18.35; Gunkel 1926: 65; Schmuttermayr 1971: 145–146; McCarter 1984: 459–460.

[55] Dahood 1966: 115; more recently, Aron Pinker (2007) has proposed that the expression refers not to a bronze bow, but to a snake-like, double-convex bow, deriving נחשה from נחש 'snake'. However, neither of these suggestions fit well with the language and style of Ps 18 or as a translation for the other occurrence of the expression (Job 20.24).

[56] Cf. Couroyer 1965: 513. This interpretation is supported by a contrasting image of Israel becoming like קשת רימה, 'bow of deceit' (Hos 7.16), which has become slack and unreliable.

[57] The occurrence of קשת נחושה in Job 20.24 suggests that this was a known term for a particular kind of long-range bow—a strong bow, that was difficult to pull, and, as implied in Ps 18, one that required particular training in order to master it. The author of Job 20.24 is therefore playing on the semantic range of נחשוה in parallelism with נשק ברזל.

[58] E.g. the stela to Amen-hotep II (*ANET* 244); cf. *ARAB* 2: 226 §578.

[59] Cf. Qimḥi in Cohen 2003: 55.

[60] Cf. the image of YHWH breaking all the weapons of war in Ps 76.4.

ber of close verbal and conceptual parallels with Hannah's Song, it seems plausible that the 2 Samuel 22 text was emended to echo 1 Sam 2.4.

The third interpretation 'And lays a bronze bow in my arms' presents quite a different image, of God guiding or placing the bow into the king's arms. *BHS* suggests that the LXX reading καὶ ἔθου has understood the verb to be וַתַּתָּה from the root נתן, which can mean 'give' or 'set / place'.[61] This would make good sense (in both Ps 18 and 2 Sam 22), and it avoids the numerous conjectural scribal errors that Gunkel's theory requires (he suggests וַתַּנַּח, from נוח hi. 'to lay, place'). The focus of this image is on the gift of a divine weapon of strength, symbolic of the intimacy between God and king, of assistance in battle and divine empowerment. In support of this interpretation, there are numerous examples of divine weapons being handed over to kings in the Assyrian and Babylonian royal annals.[62] However, the LXX version gives an easier reading and is therefore likely to be secondary.

Since the immediate literary context focuses on the gift of divine strength to the king's feet and hands, it seems most likely that the metaphor's focus is on the strength of the king's arms rather than on the gift of a weapon, and that it is an image of YHWH giving the king the skill and strength to draw a heavy bow.[63] Military prowess and expertise was something in which the kings in the ancient Near East took enormous pride. Whilst the art of stringing a bow was no doubt a difficult skill to acquire, it is the actual drawing of the bow that displays strength.[64] The bow as a symbol of power in Egypt—indicating the close relationship between Pharaoh and the gods—therefore represents the supreme manifestation of divine appointment and empowerment of the king: divine assistance in battle.[65]

Verse 36

You have given me the shield of your salvation	וַתִּתֶּן־לִי מָגֵן יִשְׁעֶךָ
And your right hand has supported me	וִימִינְךָ תִסְעָדֵנִי
(omitted in 2 Sam 22)	
And your humility has made me great	וְעַנְוָתְךָ תַרְבֵּנִי
(*And your response has made me great*	2 Sam 22) וַעֲנֹתְךָ תַרְבֵּנִי

[61] Pinker's suggestion of the root נחה 'lead/guide' (2 masc. sg. qal pf., נָחְתָּה with defective yodh) should be rejected: the consonantal text would be נחית, and the use of this verb with weapons is not found elsewhere.

[62] E.g. *ARAB* 1: 77 §226; 85 §247, cf. Keel 1978: 217.

[63] Cf. Keel 1978: 265, fig. 356 (cf. Dürr 1931: col. 697; Schäfer 1929 and 1931).

[64] Cf. *ANET* 247; *ARAB* 1: 85 §246

[65] Cf. Keel 1990: 27–66.

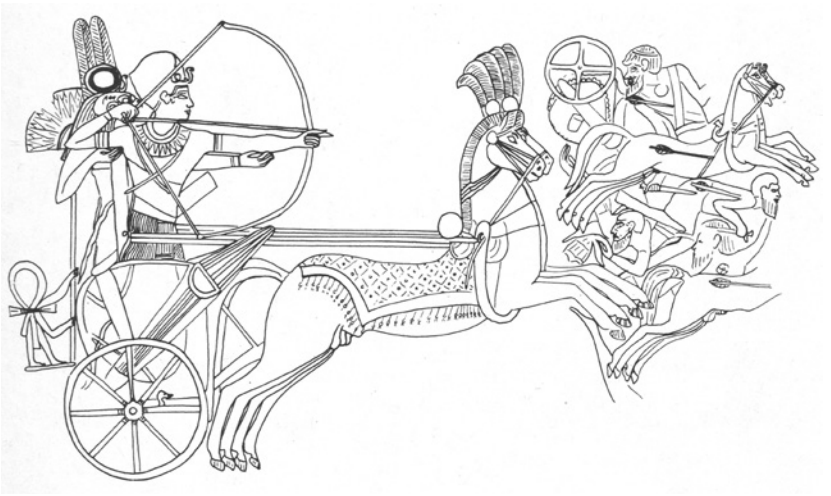

Fig. 9. A relief from the tomb of Thutmose IV depicting Montu assisting Thutmose IV in drawing his bow against his enemies in battle provides a striking comparison to Ps 18 (Keel 1978: 265, fig. 357).

Here we meet the last occurrence of the shield motif, this time painted in a slightly different colour. Previously (in vv. 3 and 31) we have been invited to see YHWH as a shield, and his presence as a place of protection, refuge and strength. Now YHWH's saving help in battle is symbolized as a shield and as a gift. The emphasis here is not primarily on who God is in relation to the psalmist (as in v. 3) but on what God has done for him. It is not, as the LXX renders it, ὑπερασπισμὸν σωτηρίας μου but 'the shield of *your* salvation'. The LXX interpretation can be understood if we compare this expression with קרן־יקעי in v. 3 and אלהי ישעי in v. 47 in parallel with צור, because it looks as if the images of strength, refuge, and shield are being intentionally elided here.

The word-picture operates on two different levels. It engages the 'frame' from the previous verse, the image of God standing alongside the king, training his hands and helping him to set his bow, and adds to this image the gift of a shield. Since an archer cannot hold a shield himself, it is God who is bearing the shield for him and protecting him in battle. It is interesting that despite the numerous examples of divine gifts of swords, bows and javelins to kings that are attested in ANE literature, no shields are given.[66] This may be precisely because of the intimate relationship that

[66] E.g. *ARAB* 2: 126 §253; 204 §508, etc.

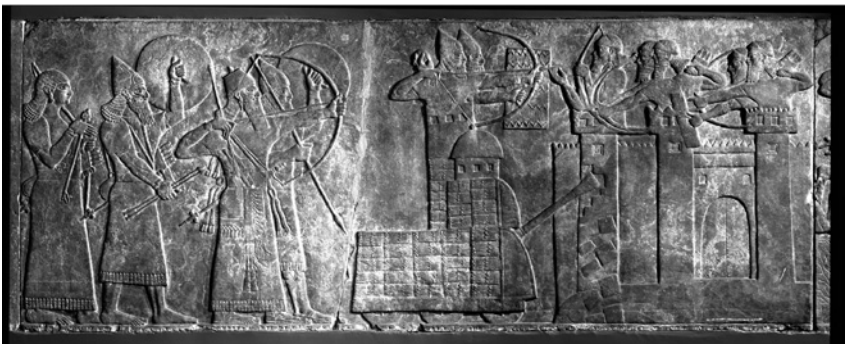

Fig. 10. Orthostat from Ashurnasipal II's palace, depicting the king assaulting a city with his bow, defended by his shield-bearer (BM 124536 © Trustees of the British Museum).

is implied by the metaphorical model of the deity as a protective shield, or, as seems to be the case here, of YHWH as shield-bearer. Wiig explores this metaphor in detail in relation to Ps 18.31–46 and draws attention to a number of striking iconographical images of archers with their shield-bearers.[67]

The description of the shield as a 'shield of salvation' creates an intriguing ambiguity in the word-picture. It enables the word-picture to allude to the gift of defence and protection in battle (such as that provided for an archer by his shield-bearer), and also to use the shield as a symbol to represent all the divine help that secures victory for the king in battle. This ambiguity of the metaphor is missed if one tries to 'unpack' it in translation, as Hossfeld and Zenger have done: 'Du gabst mir deine Hilfe zum Schild'.[68]

The expression וימינך תסעדני (omitted in 2 Sam 22), returns us to the theme of support which we met in v. 19, and provides another intimate picture of God supporting the king, this time with his own right hand. סעד can be used of sustenance with food (e.g. Judg 19.5; 1 Kgs 13.7), but its predominant usage in the Psalms is for being held up in safety (Pss 94.18; 119.117). In Ps 20.3 it is also associated with military victory and occurs in parallel with עזר 'help'. Although God's right hand is associated with victory numerous times,[69] the image in Psalm 18 shares more in common

[67] Wiig 1999: 140–157, cf. fig. 10.
[68] Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 124.
[69] E.g. Exod 15.6, 12; Job 40.14; Ps 20.6.

with the pictures of God's right hand in various contexts of refuge and deliverance (e.g. Pss 17.7; 63.9; 138.7; 139:10). Together with the image of the shield, the image of being held up in God's right hand expresses comprehensive support and protection on all sides. In light of the description that follows, it is clear that God's right hand not only assists and strengthens, but also grants victory. Chisholm draws attention to a similar motif of the divine right hand in Egyptian battle texts, e.g. Ramses II reassurance to his soldiers, that 'Amun is my protector, and his hand is with me.'[70]

The final part of this verse is problematic: עֲנָוָה 'humility' is from the root ענה (III) 'to be bowed down, afflicted', and yields a translation of 'your condescension / humility has made me great'. The term is not used elsewhere to describe God, and some translations seem almost absurd in the description of equipping the king for battle, e.g. 'your gentleness has made me great' (*NKJV*, *ESV*). However, some translators have tried to make sense of it within the context of YHWH coming down (vv. 10–11) and reaching down (v. 17) to rescue the king, e.g. 'you stoop down to make me great' (*NIV*); 'du neigst dich mir zu' (Hossfeld/Zenger), which is presumably the intended sense of the MT pointing here.[71] The LXX translation renders ענותך with παιδεία 'training', or 'instruction', which usually translates the Hebrew term מוסר '(moral) discipline' or 'chastisement' (e.g. Prov 6.23, etc). This was probably derived from an understanding of ענה pi. as 'to afflict' (as a discipline), cf. Deut 8.2; Ps 88.8. An alternative (and much easier reading) is offered in 4QSam[a], which has עזרתך 'your help', an interpretation that has been adopted in some translations.[72]

Several commentators prefer instead to re-point the word as עֲנוֹתְךָ, as a plene spelling of the 2 Sam 22.36 infinitive construct וְעַנְתְּךָ 'your answer(ing)'.[73] This echoes the theme of calling/answering in vv. 7 and 42, and is frequently explained as oracular language, particularly in relation to v. 31. Further on in Psalm 18 the king's 'answer' is contrasted with that of his enemies, who have no-one to save them, and YHWH does not answer their cry (v. 42). Examples of the use of ענה in oracular contexts can be seen in 1 Sam 14.37; 28.6, 15; Pss 60.7–8; 138.3, cf. מענה in Mic 3.7.[74]

---

[70] Erman 1927: 265, cit. in Chisholm 1983: 261–262.

[71] See Chisholm 1983: 264, n. 2 for a convincing rebuttal of Dahood's suggestion of ענותך (derived from ענו 'conquer', thus "your victory"). Schnider's suggestion to amend ענותך to עבותך and תרבני to תסבני is rather fanciful and driven by his focus on ancient Near Eastern portrayals of divine empowerment (Schnider 2006: 398).

[72] Cf. Craigie 2004: 171; *NRSV*.

[73] E.g. Kuntz 1983: 7; Seybold 1996: 78, "dein Bescheid".

[74] Cf. Chisholm 1983: 263.

The term ענה has a wide range of semantic associations, and its theological use in the Psalms is frequently found in contexts of protection, vindication, and deliverance (e.g. 3.5; 4.2; 13.4; 17.6).[75] Chisholm suggests in these cases that the use of ענה is metonymic: 'In the psalms ענה frequently refers by metonymy to Yahweh's active intervention', and offers this as an explanation for the 4QSam[a] interpretation.[76] While this interpretation is not convincing in all the cases he lists, it seems likely in this verse, i.e. it is not YHWH's 'answer' that made the king great, but the divinely aided victory that such an answer entailed.

The verb תַּרְבֵּנִי is an unusual use of the verb, which carries the meaning of an increase in number, 'to multiply', i.e. it is usually quantitative rather than qualitative. Here it has a more general sense of 'greatness', which is used of God's 'greatness' in Job 33.12. In its immediate context the greatness here refers to the king's strength and power.[77]

Verse 37

You widened my steps beneath me	תַּרְחִיב צַעֲדִי תַּחְתָּי
So that my ankles did not waver	וְלֹא מָעֲדוּ קַרְסֻלָּי

The first word-picture here can be interpreted in two different ways. If one regards צעדי as 'strides', a widening of the stride implies that YHWH increased his running speed, and in the light of v. 34, we may be reminded here of the agility and swiftness of the deer.[78] However, in light of the second word-picture, we should understand צעדי as a metonym for 'path', since widening one's steps implies a widening of the place on which one's steps are treading, meaning more room and stability. This seems to resonate with the Egyptian idiom *wsḫ nmtt* 'large steps', implying freedom of movement.[79]

Elsewhere in the HB, מעד describes the wobbling, shaking, or wavering of people and their feet or loins. Since one's foot often wobbles before it slips, the expression is commonly translated 'my feet did not slip' (e.g.

---

[75] Cf. Stendebach 2001: 223. The LXX 2 Kgdms 22 translation ὑπακοή can also be explained by the semantic range of ענה, as the LXX often translates the verb with ὑπακούειν in contexts where it could be interpreted as 'to listen' or 'to obey' (e.g. Isa 65.12; Job 13.22, etc).

[76] Chisholm 1983: 262 n. 4.

[77] Gunkel (1926: 72) suggests תגברני, on the basis of similarities to Zech 10.6, but there is no basis for a textual emendation in the Versions or other MSS.

[78] Cf. Cross and Freedman 1953: 31.

[79] Williams 1969: 93–98.

NRSV, cf. BDB 588b), understanding a metonym of cause and effect. However, this presents quite a different image and loses the vitality of the original Hebrew word-picture and the contrast with having firm feet (cf. LXX ἠσθένησαν).[80] The implication of the word-picture in Psalm 18 is that the wide path ensures stability for the king's feet—he is not making his way cautiously on a narrow path with unsteady feet.[81] קרסלי is a *hapax legomenon*, related etymologically to Akk. *kursinnu* 'fetlock, lower leg (of animals and human beings)'.[82] It is possible that the poet intentionally used a term for ankle / lower leg that could equally apply to humans and animals in order to leave room for the image of the deer to come to mind.

This spatial frame echoes the image in v. 20 of YHWH delivering the king into a broad place, contrasted with the narrow straits of distress (vv. 5–6). His feet are both secure (v. 34) and steady (v. 37). A similar metaphor is found in Prov 4.12, giving assurance that one's steps will not be restricted (צרר) on the 'paths of uprightness' (v. 11 במעגלי ישר), cf. the converse of this image in Job 18.7. Wiig's interpretation that this verse refers to the actions of the shield-bearer pushing his way forward in battle so that the archer can advance seems unduly restrictive.[83] While it can be helpful, and indeed illuminative, to look at the passage in the light of the image of YHWH as shield-bearer, there is a real danger of stamping the whole passage (vv. 31–46) with that image. Allusions to the role of shield-bearer and the relationship between shield-bearer and archer certainly seem to be evident in v. 36 and possibly also in this verse, but they should not detract from the whole series of different word-pictures which make up this section.

Interpretation: vv. 31–37

The three stark, didactic metaphors in the opening verse of this section essentially summarize the paraenetic content of the psalm and set the tone for what follows. Visually, v. 31 recapitulates two of its signature tunes: the path (running throughout vv. 21–33) and the shield (vv. 3, 31, 36). This God, who gives courage and strength, is just, and his word is

---

[80] Cf. translations of מוט used in collocation with 'feet' (e.g. Deut 32.35; Ps 66.9). I would suggest that 'waver' or 'falter' makes for a more vivid word picture in these cases also (cf. Kuntz 1983: 7).

[81] Cf. e.g. Pss 26.1; 37.31; 69.24.

[82] Cf. *CAD*, 8.566–67; Cohen 1978: 112, cit. in Chisholm 1983: 266, n. 1.

[83] Wiig 1999: 151.

reliable. This God's 'way' in all things—his character, his dealings with people, and the path he sets as an example—is perfect, good and just.[84] The psalmist has experienced this in divine rescue (vv. 17–20), the gift of an easy path (v. 33, cf. v. 37), strength and help in battle (vv. 34–37), and mighty victory (vv. 38–46). He understands this as a just reward for trusting in his God and following the 'paths' he has set. God, in his justice, has proven that he keeps his 'word', that he is reliable and trustworthy (cf. v. 36). He is thus a protective shield (v. 31) and gives the shield of his salvation (v. 36) to those who choose him as their defence, echoing and confirming the psalmist's declaration in v. 3.

The second part of this section is arranged in a concentric pattern that focuses on pictures of the king's hands, arms, feet and ankles as loci of divine empowerment. God protects and strengthens the king's feet with swiftness and agility, giving him a wide pathway in battle so that his feet do not slip (vv. 34, 37). He gives strength to his hands, empowering and equipping him to fight against his enemies, training him to be a skilled warrior and supporting him with his own hand (vv. 35–36). By maintaining the thematic content of the hymnic participles (vv. 33–35), whilst changing from 3rd to 2nd person address, verses 36–37 effect a smooth transition to the more narrative description of battle that follows (vv. 38–43).

[84] Hossfeld and Zenger's interpretation of all three symbols, 'way', 'word' and 'shield', as references to Torah seems unnecessarily narrow and restrictive (1993: 127). It misses the subtleties of the metaphors, merging God's 'ways' (v. 22) with God's 'way' (v. 31) and squashes the 'surplus of meaning' in each image. It is possible that it could have been read and reinterpreted as Torah in later usage (cf. the metaphorical use of צרפה in Ps 119.140; cf. also Ps 19.8–10), but that is an example of wider literary frames impacting the interpretation, which will be discussed further on in the study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TRANSLATION AND EXEGESIS OF PSALM 18.38–51

In terms of the overall structure of the psalm, verses 38–43 provide a narrative counterpart to the theophany (vv. 8–16), for the first time giving a description of the king's role in the victory and a report of the battle which may have occasioned the psalm. It is a fast-paced, vivid description, containing bold and dramatic images of an invincible king utterly destroying his enemies. Although the particular focus is on the king in this section, the theological focus is never far away. The mighty actions of both the king and YHWH—and the impact of these on his enemies—are interwoven as the perspective alternates between first, second and third person narrative respectively.

The focus then pans out from the battle scenes to a more general view of the king's relationship to other nations (vv. 44–46), bringing us dramatically to the psalm's conclusion. The powerful symbol sketched in vv. 38–43 of the smiting warrior king, crushing and destroying his enemies, is given further definition by his portrait in vv. 44–46: a mighty leader on the world's political stage. The spatial imagery is developed further: the king is delivered and elevated to the head of nations while his enemies shrink and tremble before him. The final section culminates in the king's praise, celebrating YHWH's gifts of deliverance, justice, and victory, and concludes with a personal vow to YHWH to praise him among the nations.

Words and Pictures in Verses 38–46

Verse 38

I pursued my enemies and overtook them	אֶרְדּוֹף אוֹיְבַי וְאַשִּׂיגֵם
(*I pursued my enemies and destroyed them*	(2 Sam 22) אֶרְדְּפָה אֹיְבַי וְאַשְׁמִידֵם
and I did not return until I had finished them off	וְלֹא־אָשׁוּב עַד־כַּלּוֹתָם

רדף and נשג frequently form a word-pair in the HB, which is usually rendered 'pursue and overtake'.[1] It is found predominantly in battle

[1] Avishur (1984: 148–9) groups these occurrences into asyndetic parataxis (Exod 15.9); syndetic parataxis (Deut 28.45; Ps 18.38); and parallelism (Gen 44.4; Exod 14.9; Deut 19.6; 1 Sam 30.8; Hos 2.9; Ps 7.6).

contexts describing a king or an army chasing, catching up with and overtaking the retreating enemy with the intent to attack and destroy them (1 Sam 30.17), or to scatter the army and take the king captive (e.g. 2 Kgs 25.5–6; Jer 39.5; 52.8). Although neither verb is used figuratively, both imply more than just their surface meaning and create vivid images. Since pursuit usually entails flight (cf. the feigned flight in Josh 8), רדף suggests that the pursuer is in a position of superiority, instilling fear into the enemy and forcing a retreat. Once the army has been overtaken, the pursuer then holds the power to decide its fate, so נשג also implies victory and success (e.g. 1 Sam 30.8).

The 2 Samuel 22 version has שמד 'to destroy' rather than נשג, a further indication of the connotations of נשג or even an intentional attempt to spell out its meaning more directly (cf. Deut 28.45 ורדפוך והשיגוך עד השמדך). It is interesting to compare the use of נשג in the imagery in Job 27.20 of terrors overtaking the wicked like a flood. This illustrates the semantic components of 'catching up with' and 'overwhelming' / 'overcoming' in the lexeme נשג and provides a vivid image of what 'overtake' might mean here in v. 38 in light of the association of enemies with flood waters in the first half of the psalm.

The second half of the verse contains the idiomatic expression עד־כלותם which occurs frequently in phrases describing the total annihilation of enemies in battle (e.g. 1 Sam 15.18; 1 Kgs 22.11 = 2 Chr 18.10) or destruction in other contexts (e.g. Deut 28.21; Jer 9.15; 49.37). The use of כלה (pi.) 'to complete, bring to an end' in the context of extermination or destruction is a clear example of a conventional metaphor, that is, its figurative meaning has become so frequent that it has become lexicalized.[2] The underlying metaphorical model is 'destruction as bringing something to an end', which is shared in the English language, as is evident, for example, in the expression 'to finish someone off', as in the translation above.

The verb כלה (pi.), continuing the psalm's hyperbole, boasts of the king's strength and testifies to his endurance—he did not settle for chasing them away, every last one was pursued and annihilated. The job was thoroughly completed. The totality of the destruction of the enemy, as one might expect, is a common feature in ancient Near Eastern depictions and accounts of victory, which often exaggerate in order to illustrate the superior strength of the king and the total defeat of his enemies. A similar

[2] Cf. e.g. Deut 7.22; 2 Sam 21.5; 2 Chr 8.8; Jer 10.25.

metaphor for destruction is found in Sargon's Annals, e.g. 'I mustered the armies of Assur and *utterly destroyed* Tabal' (lit. *finished* Tabal).[3]

Verse 39

I struck them down so that they could not rise	אֶמְחָצֵם וְלֹא־יֻכְלוּ קוּם
(*I finished them off and struck them down so*	וָאֲכַלֵּם וָאֶמְחָצֵם וְלֹא יְקוּמוּן
that they could not rise[4]	2 Sam 22)
They fell under my feet	יִפְּלוּ תַּחַת רַגְלָי

Following the 'broad brush' description of the previous verse, we are now presented with more detailed images of the defeat. מחץ, only found in poetic literature, often carries a great deal of theological and cosmological weight. It is used of God smiting Rahab (Job 26.12; cf. Hab 3.13), shattering or destroying kings and leaders of nations (Ps 110.5–6) and in declarations of God's character (Ps 68.21–2). In contexts of hope in YHWH's absolute sovereignty and incomparability, he declares himself to be one who strikes (Deut 32.39).[5] The choice of this verb in particular seems to have the potential to connect the king's earthly battle with timeless, cosmic ones, thus confirming the identification made earlier in the psalm of the king's power as a warrior with God's power as a warrior, and the king's enemies with God's enemies.

The action is more specific than just 'kill' (e.g. הרג or מות hi.), and suggests proximity to the enemy and a degree of physical force. In Judg 5.26 מחץ occurs with a human subject in parallel with הלם 'strike' / 'hammer', and in collocation with חלף 'pass through' / 'pierce', describing Deborah striking and killing Sisera. There is finality about the verb, suggesting that in battle contexts, the consequence *must* be victory.[6] The 'smiting motif', as Keel calls it, has strong connections with the rise of kingship, and is found in a number of iconographical representations across the ancient world, including Palestine.[7]

---

[3] *ARAB* 2: 11 §25 (my italics), cf. *ARAB* 1: 212 §596.

[4] It is most likely that 2 Sam 22 preserves a conflate text; the additional verb אכלם seems to be a secondary addition, influenced by כלותם in the previous verse (cf. Cross and Freedman 1953: 32 n. 88).

[5] This occurs antithetically with רפא 'heal', cf. also Job 5.18.

[6] Cf. Deut 33.11, which also has the verb מחץ with the motif of 'not being able to rise'.

[7] Keel 1978: 291–297.

Fig. 11. The oldest illustration of this motif in a battle context from the Narmer palette, c. 2850 B.C. (Keel 1978: 293, fig. 397).[8]

In the illustration above the king dominates the scene, brandishing a mace and seizing the enemy by his forelock. The cluster of symbols in the right-hand corner indicates that it is the falcon-god Horus' victory.[9] The Egyptian expression to 'lift the mace' came to have the meaning 'to overpower, conquer, take control', highlighting the close relationship between graphic or literary representations of domination and the 'conceptual image'.[10] In Psalm 18 the word-picture operates on two levels: on one hand it depicts the king's actions in battle and on the other it illustrates the result of these actions and his overall supremacy.

The inability to rise expressed by ולא־יכלו קום appears to be a common idiomatic expression for the certainty of death (e.g. Deut 33.11; Isa 43.17). This occurs not only in the HB but also in other ancient Near Eastern descriptions of battle and conflict.[11] Such was the force of the king's blow

[8] Keel 1978: 293, fig. 397.
[9] Keel 1978: 292.
[10] Keel 1978: 295, cf. e.g. CoS II: 24 (KRI I 9.1–10.9).
[11] E.g. *CoS* II: 35, 'The Battle of Kadesh', line 127; cf. KTU 1.19, II.38.

(מחץ) that the enemies could not get up again, either to defend themselves or to run away. There is a word-play on קום in vv. 39–40: those who had risen up against the king can now no longer rise. In both verses, קום is juxtaposed with its spatial opposite (יפלו and תכריע), echoing the 'up-down' motif and the reversal of fortune between the king and his enemies that is played out in the second half of the psalm.

The image of the king's feet (cf. vv. 34, 37) reappears here in a vivid metaphor of subjugation, where they symbolize the power to conquer and subdue (cf. Ps 45.6). The foot as a symbol of sovereign power and dominance pervades biblical and other ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography (e.g. 1 Kgs 5.17; Isa 49.23; Pss 47.4; 110.1).[12]

To unpack the word-picture further, the enemy falling under the king's feet implies that he has his foot on them, i.e. the ability to tread on them. This engages a realm of conceptual associations connected with things that can be trodden or stamped on. The performative aspect to this image is to reduce the enemy spatially—the king is superior to them, and if they are under his feet they are presumably lying prostrate—and of diminishing their significance, likening them to dirt and dust (cf. v. 43). It is a picture of ultimate control and domination.

A number of word-pictures in vv. 38–43 have an interesting combination of metaphorical ambiguity and symbolic power about them. The two word-pictures in this verse give a vivid description of what actually happened in battles: the king's opponents were unable to get up again, because they had all been slain, so that they were literally 'at his feet', or 'under his feet' as he stepped over them. But the images also carry a deeper symbolism that makes use of universal, archetypal conceptions of power, dominance, and victory, so that the word-pictures operate on two different levels simultaneously. A similar phenomenon seems to be at work in iconographical parallels of battle depictions. So powerful were the images of a king smiting his enemy, of treading on his foe, and of the defeated bowing down before the king in submission, that they became iconic both in word and picture.[13]

---

[12] Cf. an inscription of Tukulti-Ninurta I "I placed my feet upon his lordly neck as on a footstool" (Weidner 1959: 62, cit. in Stendebach 2004: 312 n. 45). See also *CoS* II: 30 (KRI I 19.7–20.11); *ARAB* 2: 213 §532.

[13] Cf. Keel 1978: 294–295.

Fig. 12. Relief of Ramses II from Abu Simbel (Keel 1978: 297, fig. 404).

Verse 40

For you girded me with strength for the fight	וַתְּאַזְּרֵנִי חַיִל לַמִּלְחָמָה
You made those rising up against me bow down under me	תַּכְרִיעַ קָמַי תַּחְתָּי

Here the focus returns to God as the source of the king's strength, repeating the word-picture in v. 33 (cf. האל המאזרני חיל) of God equipping the king for battle, and presenting a theological 're-telling' of the previous verse with the repetition of תחת. In its context here, the 'girding of strength' is now a specific occasion on which this gift secured victory. The resonances of protection from v. 33 have faded and the power to attack and overcome enemies comes to the fore. It re-paints the picture from the previous verse in a theological light: it was *God* who made the enemies sink under his feet. The motif of divinely ordained subjection under the king's feet is echoed elsewhere in ancient Near Eastern texts: Amun declares to Thutmose III 'I have felled the enemies beneath thy sandals'.[14]

[14] Breasted 1988: 263, cf. Grayson 1996: I 58 §381.

The verb כרע in the HB usually describes 'sinking down' as a result of violence or oppression. It is used to describe someone falling down after having been struck (e.g. Judg 5.27; 2 Kgs 9.24), or of prisoners kneeling (Isa 10.4) and awaiting slaughter (Isa 65.12). In Ps 17.13, YHWH is called upon to confront the psalmist's enemies and to force them to sink down (כרע hi). The verb קום is often followed by going to, or engaging in, battle (e.g. Josh 8.3; Judg 4.14; 2 Sam 2.14) and the substantive קמי here is a vivid way of describing those who have risen up against the king. It is repeated in v. 48, where the enemies' uprising is surpassed by God's action of raising up the king. Here, though, it is juxtaposed with God's action of pushing them down.

Verse 41

You gave me the neck of my enemies	וְאֹיְבַי נָתַתָּה לִּי עֹרֶף
and those who hated me I destroyed	וּמְשַׂנְאַי אַצְמִיתֵם

The phrase נתן ערף appears to have two possible interpretations and requires a closer look at images involving the 'neck' in BH. The metonymic idiom פנה ערף 'to turn one's back' (lit. 'neck') occurs several times in a battle context to mean 'retreat' or 'flee' (e.g. Josh 7.12; Jer 48.39). When fleeing one turns one's back on the enemy (cf. Jer 49.24). 'Turning the back' in the context of battle thus signifies retreat, as in the English idiom 'turn tail'. This can be compared with the metaphorical use of פנה ערף 'turning one's back on someone' (e.g. Jer 2.27; 32.33).[15] The expression we have here: נתן + ערף is also found in Exod 23.27, in God's promise to Israel that they will conquer Canaan: ונתתי את־כל־איביך אליך ערף, translated in the *NRSV* as 'I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you' i.e. retreat.[16] This verse in Psalm 18 has been understood in a similar way: God has made the king's enemies retreat, providing a neat parallel with v. 15, where YHWH puts his enemies to flight with his arrows and lightning.[17]

However, there are two reasons for rejecting such an interpretation both in this verse and in Exod 23.27. Firstly, the subject of the verb נתן is not the one fleeing, as in other occurrences of the expression, but YHWH, suggesting that this is not making use of the conventional idiom described

[15] Here the author of Jeremiah plays with the idea of figuratively and non-figuratively turning one's back, exploiting and stretching the metaphor's grammar by comparing it with turning one's face towards God.

[16] Cf. the metaphorical use of נתן + ערף in 2 Chr 29.6, to describe the people abandoning God.

[17] Cf. Gunkel 1926: 72; Chisholm 1983: 268; Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 124.

above. Secondly, in the three preceding verses there are clear images of total domination and destruction. It would seem out of place to see the enemy fleeing, when we have just been told that they were 'finished off', 'unable to rise' and 'sinking' under the king. It is more likely, therefore, that this is another image (complementing vv. 39–40) of YHWH bringing the king's enemies to him in submission: YHWH brings the necks of his enemies to the king's feet, for execution.[18] This occurs in Josh 10.24, where Joshua invites the warrior chiefs to put their feet on the necks of the five defeated kings, before Joshua strikes them dead (v. 26). Ashurbanipal describes the divine help he received in his 7th campaign against Elam in similar terms: 'Assur and Ishtar, who go at my side and cause me to stand upon (the neck) of my foes . . . and they brought him again, a second time, into submission at my feet'.[19]

The repetition of the word-pair אֹיְבַי / שַׂנְאַי(מְ) harks back to an earlier picture in the psalm (v. 18), where the king is delivered from his strong enemies, and overlays this image with one of their defeat and annihilation. Thus the psalmist transforms the scene of rescue into one of victory, by inverting the positions of the king and his enemies. Those who hate the king are wiped out (צמת), echoing the intensity of כלל (v. 38b). צמת is used exclusively in poetic literature and usually means to destroy or annihilate, predominantly with God as its subject.[20] In Ps 89.24 it is God who promises to strike down (נגף) those who hate the king. In Psalm 18, alongside the image of God as the one who brings the king's enemies to his feet, it is the king who destroys them, as in v. 38b. The roles of God and the king are thus closely interwoven: the victory is clearly seen as a collaborative effort.

Verse 42

They cried out but there was no-one to save them	יְשַׁוְּעוּ וְאֵין־מוֹשִׁיעַ
(*They looked but there was no-one to save them*	(2 Sam 22 יְשָׁעוּ וְאֵן מוֹשִׁיעַ
unto YHWH but he did not answer them	עַל־יְהוָה וְלֹא עָנָם

Reinforcing the role-reversal of the king and his enemies, the psalmist returns to the motif of 'crying out' and 'answering' from the beginning of the psalm (v. 4 and v. 7), with an aural play on the roots ישע and שוע

[18] Cf. Dahood 1966: 116; Craigie 2004: 171; Gordon 2004: 308.
[19] *ARAB* 2: 306–307 §803, cf. *ANEP* 138 fig. 393.
[20] Cf. Pss 73.27 and 143.12 in parallel with אבד (hi); cf. KTU 1.2. IV. 9; 1.3 II.8; III. 44.

However, the stark contrast with the confidence of deliverance in v. 7 is chilling—for the enemies there is none to save and none to answer them. The theme of calling or crying out to God for help and being answered (or not) is a familiar one in the HB (e.g. 1 Sam 11.3–11). The agent of help may be God or someone appointed by him (e.g. 2 Kgs 13.5; Neh 9.27),[21] but the king's enemies in Psalm 18 have no such helper. In light of the monotheistic tone of v. 32, one cannot help thinking here of passages such as Hos 13.4: 'besides me there is no saviour (מושיע)', cf. Isa 43.11; 45.21.

It is very rare in the HB for non-Israelites to call upon YHWH for help. It occurs twice (Jonah 1.14; 3.8), but not in the context of battle on foreign soil, as it is here in Psalm 18.[22] Kraus' suggestion, that the enemies in view are rebel Israelites, is possible,[23] although there are some indications in Assyrian military records that defeated enemies may have appealed to foreign gods, e.g. Ashurbanipal's description of Tammaritu pleading for his life: 'he implored my majesty, in the name of Assur and Ishtar. He took his stand before me, making complete submission to the power of my great gods'.[24]

Verse 43

וְאֶשְׁחָקֵם כְּעָפָר עַל־פְּנֵי־רוּחַ	*I pulverized them like dust in the face of the wind*[25]
כְּטִיט חוּצוֹת אֲרִיקֵם	*Like sludge in the streets I poured them out*
2 Sam 22 וְאֶשְׁחָקֵם כַּעֲפַר־אָרֶץ	*I pulverized them like the dust of the earth*
כְּטִיט־חוּצוֹת אֲדַקֵּם אֶרְקָעֵם	*Like mud in the streets I crushed them and trampled on them*

The final shot in this battle scene returns to the king in action, using the vibrant colours of hyperbole again to conclude the description of utter annihilation of his enemies that began in v. 38. The verb שחק does not occur very often in the HB, but it describes the action of beating or grinding something down into fine particles (e.g. Exod 30.36; Job 14.19). It could be a deliberate echo from the theophany, where שחק in v. 12 refers to clouds (made up of fine particles). Whether this is deliberate assonance or

[21] Cf. Sawyer 1990: 450.

[22] Cf. the ambiguous reference in 1 Sam 5.12 to the Philistines' cry going up to heaven ותעל שועה העיר השמים.

[23] Kraus 1993: 264.

[24] *ARAB* 2: 303 §793.

[25] BHS proposes כַּעֲפַר־רְחֹב 'like the dust of the plain' or כַּעֲפַר־אֹרַח 'like the dust of the path'.

word-play is difficult to discern, but it is interesting to consider its potential poetic effects. On the surface there is a significant semantic difference between these two uses of the root שחק. In v. 12 it describes God's canopy of dark waters and clouds, while in this verse it pictures the action of the king utterly crushing his enemies, so that they become as fine as dust, tossed about by the wind. However, on a deeper level, both 'pictures' communicate power: God demonstrates power by making dark waters and thick clouds his canopy. The king demonstrates his power by turning his enemies into dust. The verb שחק in the simile creates a powerful word-picture of the king displaying his strength in crushing his enemy so utterly that they were like dust. This image merits further probing, particularly as the 'near-repetition' of the phrase על־פני־רוח here has led a number of scholars to regard it as a textual corruption based on v. 11.[26]

The image of עפר is used in a number of different images throughout the HB. It often symbolizes worthlessness or humiliation, usually when associated with the dust on the ground under one's feet (e.g. Gen 3.14; Isa 47.1; Ps 72.9). This is the sense intended by the 2 Samuel 22 reading כעפר־ארץ, which fits with the images in vv. 39–40 of striking down the enemy and trampling them underfoot, and the subsequent metaphor about טיט 'mud', depicting the enemies as dirt that is trodden underfoot.[27] However, the meaning in Psalm 18 is more closely related to the description in another account of military victory, in 2 Kgs 13.7, in which the king of Aram destroys the majority of Jehoahaz's army, making them 'like the dust from threshing' (כעפר לדוש). Rather than a scribal error, therefore, there are strong grounds for understanding this as a deliberate choice of word-picture.

Agricultural images of threshing and winnowing are common in ancient Near Eastern descriptions of defeating enemies in battle, and are used elsewhere in the HB. In threshing, the edible part of the grain is loosened from the chaff by beating it on the floor or using animals to stamp on it (cf. 2 Kgs 13.7; Isa 41.15; Mic 4.13). Winnowing describes the second part of the process in which the mixture is thrown up into the air, allowing the wind to blow the chaff away, leaving the grain (cf. e.g. Isa 41.2; Mic 4.13).[28]

The expression על־פני־רוח therefore depicts the image of the enemy being so crushed that they are as light as dust, scattered and dispersed

---

[26] Cross and Freedman (1953: 32 n. 94) argue on metrical grounds to abandon the Ps 18 version.

[27] Cf. the parallels of 'dirt' and 'dung' with עפר in Zec 9.3; Zeph 1.17 and Job 27.16.

[28] Cf. *ARAB* 1: 280 §781; 281 §783; KTU I.6.ii. 32, 34.

in the wind (cf. LXX λεπτυνω). The repetition of רוח not only resonates with the language of v. 11 (possibly an intentional reminder of YHWH's triumphant descent and attack), but also, more importantly, with v. 16, where YHWH blasts away the water with the force of his breath. This accentuates the parallel actions of YHWH and the king in defeating the enemy. These two images can be found in a simile in Isa 17.13: YHWH will rebuke the nations and they will flee away, chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind and whirling dust before the storm. The implicit conceptual association in the word-picture is that the enemy is as worthless as chaff. Used as a description or a threat, the image of being turned to dust therefore serves to denigrate and shame the enemy, as well as to convey total destruction, devastation, and defeat.

The second word-picture in this verse has caused some difficulty, particularly in light of the differences between Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22. The latter provides a neat parallelism in this verse: 'dust of the earth' and 'mud in the streets' are both dirty, worthless and trodden underfoot. The enemy is thus shamed and denigrated in a continuation of the spatial motif of the enemies being subdued under the king's feet. The verbs שחק and דקק are used together elsewhere (Exod 30.36) and דקק also appears in other contexts of crushing enemies (e.g. Mic 4.13; cf. Isa 41.15). Several scholars therefore regard Ps 18.43 as a later corruption.[29] However, there are strong grounds for retaining the *lectio difficilior* in Psalm 18.

Firstly, the Versions suggest that 2 Samuel 22 preserves a conflate text: LXX and Syr. only translate אדקם, and 4QSam[a] has ארקעם alone. The latter verb (רקע 'beat, stamp'), is perhaps a gloss to אדקם (דקק 'crush, thresh'). Although the sense of דקק in 2 Samuel 22 clearly has the sense of crushing or pounding, it is usually associated with grinding and threshing, which is slightly odd in collocation with thick, heavy mud. ארקעם therefore paints the more common picture of mud or clay being trodden on (cf. רמס Isa 41.25). In fact Mic 7.10 has an almost identical expression, but with מרמס 'trampling': עתה תהיה למרמס כטיט חוצות and Zech 10.5 appears to use a similar, although elliptical, image: והיו כגברים בוסים בטיט חוצות.

Secondly, although support for the 2 Samuel 22 reading is strong in the Versions (LXX, Tg and Syr. Psalm 18 all translate דקק, and the Vg.

[29] E.g. Schmuttermayr 1971: 167ff; Chisholm 1983: 274, and Kraus 1993: 255. Interestingly, the textual differences barely receive a mention in more recent commentaries (e.g. Seybold, Craigie, and Hossfeld and Zenger), which simply translate MT Ps 18 and footnote the variant reading in 2 Sam 22. *NRSV, ESV, NIV, NKJV* all follow MT Ps 18, while the *GNV* and *NJPS* prefer MT 2 Sam 22.

simply has a more general verb for annihilation, *deleo*), Aquila testifies to an early reading of אריקם with the translation ἐκκενώσω.[30] Thirdly, there is no need to expect a close relationship between the two lines here; the imagery in Psalm 18 does not tend to 'stand still' (cf. vv. 33, 35, 36, 37, 38. 39, 40). Finally, if we look at the image-fields of both word-pictures, there are literary examples which support both readings.

The verb ריק, which usually describes the action of emptying (e.g. a sack, Gen 42.35) or pouring out (e.g. clouds with rain, Eccl 11.3), appears to be a rather odd action to describe טיט חוצות until we look at other images of dirt in the streets. Zech 9.3 refers to Tyre's accumulation of wealth as a piling up of silver and gold like dust (כעפר) and the dirt of the streets (חוצות כטיט). Alongside this are other biblical images of the streets being full of corpses, like refuse (e.g. Isa 5.25; Ezk 11.6). The simile in Psalm 18 can therefore be understood in terms of the domestic image of emptying sludge out into the streets. This relates to previous images of annihilation by describing what happened in the aftermath of the battle-slaughter. Zephaniah 1.17 has a closely related image in the prophecy of the Day of YHWH: ושפך דמם כעפר ולחמם כגללים 'and their blood will be poured out like dirt and their flesh (lit. intestines) like dung'.[31]

The defilement of enemy corpses is a common feature in ancient Near Eastern accounts of victory, and communicates utter annihilation and shame (cf. Ps 68.24).[32] Being denied a proper burial and having corpses left in the open was regarded as an extreme insult and punishment (Jer 8.2; 16.4; 25.33), and is a common boast in Assyrian annals.[33] In both word-pictures, the focus seems to be not only on the annihilation of their bodies but also the extreme contempt with which their corpses were treated.

Verse 44

You deliver me from national conflicts[34]	תְּפַלְּטֵנִי מֵרִיבֵי עָם
You appoint me as the head of nations	תְּשִׂימֵנִי[35] לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם
(*You guard me as the head of nations*	(2 Sam 22 תִּשְׁמְרֵנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם
People whom I do not know serve me	עַם לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יַעַבְדוּנִי

[30] Driver 1936: 173.

[31] Berlin (1994: 91) suggests the sense of this unusual image is that the corpse remains will be "scattered over the landscape".

[32] *ANET* 288.

[33] *ARAB* 1: 223 §611; cf. *ARAB* 2: 81 §153.

[34] The variant reading עַמִּי in 2 Sam 22 is generally understood to be an old genitive case ending (Cross and Freedman 1953: 33 n. 99; Schmuttermayr 1971: 169).

[35] Another Hebr. MS and Tg. Ps 18 follow the 2 Sam 22 reading תשמרני.

The first part of this verse has been regarded by some scholars as out of place or as a late intruder into the psalm.[36] However, the repetition of the root פלט in an address to YHWH (cf. v. 3) and the climactic parallelism and word-play in the tricolon should make us hesitate before abandoning v. 44a. Whether or not it originally belonged here, it certainly fits: the emphatic repetition עם...גוים...עם in staircase parallelism serves to stress the extent of the king's power and to build up a moving picture which echoes the movement of the psalm as a whole, from deliverance to victory and domination, first over many nations and then expanding further to other nations:

i) The king is rescued from national conflicts (cf. מפלטי in v. 3), reminiscent of the original story of rescue (vv. 17–20);
ii) Once rescued, he is set up high (v. 34), and he is now described as divinely appointed to be the head of not one but many nations;
iii) Other nations then spontaneously come forward to serve the king, as a result of this divine appointment and the king's decisive victories.

The phrase ריבי עם is not found elsewhere in the HB.[37] ריב often denotes 'strife' or 'dispute' (cf. LXX ῥύσῃ με ἐξ ἀντιλογιῶν λαοῦ, cf. Gen 13.7; Exod 17.7), which expresses rather too mild a form of conflict in this context of military warfare. The repetition of עם in the third line of this verse in parallel with גוים speaks against the common interpretation of עם as a reference to Israel and to ריבי as its internal disputes.[38] A few occurrences of ריב in the context of conflicts *between* nations therefore deserve further attention. The expressions איש ריב in Judg 12.2 and אנשי ריבך Isa 41.11, albeit not analogous constructions (ריב as *nomen rectum* rather than *nomen regens*), bear witness to a 'fringe' meaning of ריב, which has semantic associations with physical conflict rather than the verbal conflict suggested by 'quarrel' and 'contention'. A similar sense of ריב (qal) is also found in Judg 11.25, where it stands in parallel with נלחם 'to wage war'. These examples highlight a wider semantic range of ריב elsewhere in BH than is usually acknowledged in discussions of Ps 18.44 and suggest an interpretation of ריבי עם as 'national conflicts'.

---

[36] E.g. Adam (2001: 111–112; 133–136) regards v. 44a as part of a later redaction with vv. 21–32; Cross and Freedman (1953: 33 n. 98) suggest that it originally belonged to v. 49.

[37] The sg. construction occurs in the DSS describing the actions of wayward Israel CD 1.21: וסיסו לריב עם, although this does not shed much light on the expression in Ps 18.

[38] *Pace* Chisholm 1983: 276f; Craigie 2004: 168.

The way in which—and the 'place' to which—the king has been delivered from these conflicts is to be set on high (cf. vv. 17, 34). The head (ראש), being the uppermost part of the body, naturally lends itself to metaphorical use to denote someone who is the chief or leader of a group of people, as in the English expressions 'head of the family', 'head of state', etc. In the HB, ראש is frequently used to describe the head of a tribe (e.g. Nu 30.2), the head of a family (e.g. Exod 6.14), and the head(s) of a nation (e.g. Exod 18.25; Job 12.24). However, the construction לראש גוים is unique, containing within it the bold declaration that many nations will be drawn together under one sovereign, that they will function as one body, one state.[39] The king will not be just one of many 'heads', but *the* head.

The audacity of this claim makes it unlikely that the 2 Samuel 22 version תשמרני should be preferred here. This is a divine appointment of epic proportions. Deut 28.13 makes an interesting connection between being 'set at the head' (נתן לראש) and obedience to the commandments. Considering that the focus of Ps 18.21ff. is on obedience to the commandments, it seems fitting that the king's reward here is to be set at the head of nations. In terms of its imagery, it artfully engages the description of YHWH as the king's deliverer (v. 3) and of being set on the heights (v. 34). God is the one who carefully sets and secures the king in a high place. In this verse, the height at the head of the nations is not just a place of victory but a place of domination par excellence.

The idea that there were lands and peoples as yet 'unknown' to the king at first sight seems to represent the expansiveness of the king's dominion. However, the verb ידע can also have a more specific technical sense in the context of vassal treaties. In such cases the verb refers to both the formal recognition of a legitimate suzerain by a vassal state and the suzerain's acknowledgement of a claim by a vassal state.[40] For example in the Amarna tablets, there is a letter from Abdi-Aširta, king of Amurru, to his suzerain, Amenophis III, seeking military protection and pleading for recognition: 'May the king my lord *know* me . . . and put me under the charge of Paḫa(m)nate, my (royal) governor'.[41] This interpretation certainly fits the context of vv. 44–46, which depict foreign nations coming in fear

[39] Cf. the use of ל with שית (Ps 45.17) and צוה (e.g. 1 Sam 13.14; 25.30), cf. BDB 512a.
[40] Huffmon 1966, cf. Chisholm 1983: 277.
[41] Huffmon 1966: 32 (my italics).

Fig. 13. A tomb wall painting from Abd el Qurna: a group of Asiatics paying homage and bringing tribute to Thutmose IV (Keel 1978: 304, fig. 408).

to acknowledge the king's authority and leadership.[42] Examples of this can be seen in the narratives of 2 Samuel (e.g. 8.9; 10.19, cf. Isa 55.5).

Verse 45

As soon as their ears hear of me they show obedience to me	לְשֵׁמַע אׇזֶן יִשָּׁמְעוּ לִי
Sons of foreigners shrink before me	בְּנֵי־נֵכָר יְכַחֲשׁוּ־לִי
(*Sons of foreigners shrink themselves before me*	בְּנֵ נֵכָר יִתְכַּחֲשׁוּ־לִי 2 Sam 22)[43]

The expression לשמע אזן, lit. 'at the hearing of the ear' is a beautifully succinct expression in Hebrew, conveying the simultaneity of the action. It is complemented by the root play and assonance of ישמעו. The niphal is unusual here, since the qal has the sense of 'obey' elsewhere. The

[42] Cf. Chisholm 1983: 278.

[43] In 2 Sam 22.45, the two hemi-stichs are inverted.

comparison cited in BDB of 'paying heed to' in Eccl 9.17 is not compelling as it is passive: דברי חכמים בנחת נשמעים.[44] Far more likely is that a reflexive sense is intended here: 'they show themselves obedient to me'.[45]

The use of synecdoche ('ears' hearing rather than 'people') creates a vivid image of reports reaching the ears of peoples far away. Mere hearsay is enough to render them subject to his rule. This focus on ears cleverly conveys the idea that they do not even wait to see the king with their eyes (cf. Job 42.5)—their ears have heard enough to make a decision to obey. His reputation precedes him and they fear his power. It is striking that several times elsewhere in the HB it is YHWH and his reputation that is feared by nations that hear of his actions on behalf of Israel. Their response, like the king's enemies in vv. 45–6 is one of fear and trembling (Exod 15.14; 2 Chr 20.29; Jer 33.9; Zech 8.23).

The focus now zooms in on the individuals from these foreign nations who are described as בני־נכר. This expression refers, in the vast majority of cases, to non-Israelites, simply naming them in a neutral, non-judgmental context (e.g. Gen 17.12, 27; Exod 12.43; Lev 22.25).[46] The picture evoked by the common English translation 'cringing' (e.g. *NRSV*) is one of obsequious homage, of foreigners bowing down and paying tribute in order to avoid death (cf. the images in Ps 72.9–11).[47] In both Pss 66.3 and 81.16, the cringing of enemies (כחש pi.) before God is associated with his power and mighty deeds and is explicitly connected (in Ps 81) with subduing Israel's enemies (cf. כחשׁ ni. in Deut 33.29). However, it is possible to interpret כחש figuratively, according to one of its other meanings 'to grow lean', in the sense of to wither or shrink. In Ps 109.24, for example, כחש qal describes a person's flesh 'shrinking from fatness'; the verb is used similarly in Hab 3.17 of the shrinking of olive produce. A similar image is found in Zeph 2.11, of God making his enemies wither (רזה 'to make lean'). Eaton expands on this idea as follows:

> Whereas triumph is understood to expand one's being in an aura of glory, defeat means a corresponding shrinkage. The enemies of YHWH may fill out with arrogant pride, but they are quickly reduced when they feel the

---

[44] BDB 1034a; cf. Rüterswörden 2006: 277.

[45] Cf. Briggs and Briggs 1906–7: I 149; Delitzsch 1984: I 331.

[46] However, in Ps 144.7, 11 it occurs in a pejorative context.

[47] BDB (471a) suggests the use of כחש (pi.) here for 'cringing' arises from its meaning 'to deceive', to feign obedience.

> weight of his manifested glory . . . They are, as we might say, 'cut down to size' before God or the representative of his kingdom.[48]

This understanding of כחש, then, transforms the line into a vivid metaphor that connects with the spatial imagery running throughout the psalm. The king is appointed as head of the nations ('high') and, in contrast, other nations shrink ('low') before him. A similar image is used to describe the enemies of Ramses II and the Prince of Hatti: 'Then the great princes of every land, when they passed by them, were dismayed, turned back, shrinking'.[49] Such an interpretation is also supported in Psalm 18 by its immediate literary co-text, as there is another 'botanical' description in the following line of the 'sons of foreigners' drooping (נבל).

Verse 46

Sons of foreigners wilt	בְּנֵי־נֵכָר יִבֹּלוּ
And come trembling from their strongholds	וְיַחֲרְגוּ מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתֵיהֶם
(*And come limping from their strongholds*	2 Sam 22 וְיַחְגְּרוּ מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתָם

Climactic parallelism is employed in the two bicola in vv. 45–46 using increasingly demeaning descriptions of the enemies' response to the power of the king: they obey, shrink, wilt and tremble (שמע, כחש, נבל, חרג). The repetition of בני־נכר emphatically keeps the focus on 'foreigners'. More images of humiliation follow: this time the 'foreigners' are not just coming to pay tribute but are described as 'drooping' or 'withering'. They come (the verb of motion is understood by מן) trembling in fear from the safety of their borders. The pictures are of capitulation, fear and physical weakness.

As mentioned above, נבל provides us with another botanical image. In the Psalms and the prophets it is used in a variety of similes and metaphors, often associated with judgment. נבל frequently describes grass, blossom or leaves and expresses different images (fading, withering or falling) of faithlessness and the effects of judgment (e.g. Isa 24.4; 40.7; Pss 1.3; 37.2). It is also used to describe Moses collapsing from exhaustion and hard work (Exod 18.18). A common semantic strand in the lexeme seems to be the idea of depletion. Nearly all the images describe a depletion of something that was formerly there, be it energy, vitality, moisture, or beauty. In Psalm 18, the immediate co-text of נבל (כחש and חרג)

[48] Eaton 1968: 603–04.
[49] *ANET* 258.

suggests that the focus of the metaphor is on the 'foreigners' losing their courage and strength, mentally and physically wilting.[50] They give up or 'lose heart' (cf. *NRSV*).

The translation 'wilt' is therefore an attempt to resonate with the image of shrinking (כחש) in the previous verse and to suggest weariness of mind and body, whilst maintaining something of the botanical imagery that is associated elsewhere with נבל. This botanical metaphor or 'lens' does something else: it serves to undermine the 'sons of foreigners'. In the process of seeing them as something that is drooping or wilting, one cannot help also regarding them as something easily blown away—like grass or leaves or blossom in the wind, they are unable to withstand any great force and thus do not pose a significant or permanent threat. Perhaps once they were strong and vibrant, yet now they are weak, lifeless, and crushable.

The second hemi-stich is different in the two texts: 2 Samuel 22 has חגר rather than the *hapax legomenon* חרג Psalm 18.[51] It is unclear which verb is original and there is evidence to support both readings, with a variety of interpretative possibilities. BHS endorses the LXX Psalm 17 rendering of the verb with χωλαίνω ('become lame'), related to the postbibl. Heb. and Aram. חגר 'to halt, limp', which would entail an error by metathesis in Psalm 18 and would dispense with the usual (and rather awkward) translation of חגר as 'gird'.

However, similar images elsewhere, together with the description of the enemies in the previous verse, suggest that a state of fear and trembling is intended by חרג here (with motion 'away from' indicated by מן), the interpretation favoured by BDB (353a) and NRSV. There is support for this in Aram. חרגה and חרגתא (cf. Tg Deut 32.25 חרגת מותא 'deathly terror').[52] Two conceptual parallels also suggest a close semantic relationship between חרד,רגז and חרג: in Mic 7.17 the nations' response to YHWH is to come trembling out of their fortresses (ירגזו ממסגרתיהם), and in Hos 11.10–11 Israel is described as coming trembling after YHWH in response to his authoritative roar. If this is the case in Psalm 18, the image could trigger conceptual reverberations of YHWH's theophany in v. 8, when the earth

---

[50] Cf. Vg. iuxta Hebr. *defluent* 'they droop'. LXX Ps 17.46 ἐπαλαιώθησαν seems to connect the form to בלה (cf. Deut 29.4, etc.). The Syr. and Tg. follow another Heb. MS which reads יבלו (cf. v. 38).

[51] The readings in 4QSam[a] (לא יחגרו ממסרותם 'they were not fettered by their bonds') and LXX[L] 'they were released from their bonds' make no sense in the context.

[52] Cf. Ges[18] 393.

trembled and quaked at the sound of his coming. The king has a similar impact on his enemies as YHWH's coming had on the natural world.

The place from which the foreigners come is usually understood as some kind of enclosure, since מסגרת refers elsewhere to a side or border of an object (e.g. Exod 25.25; 1 Kgs 7.28–29, etc.), cf. the verb סגר 'shut, close'. This has been interpreted as either a hostile place ('prison', 'dungeon', cf. *DCH* 5, 360) or a place of security ('border', 'fortress', cf. BDB, 689b). From the context it seems more likely that the picture is of foreign nations coming in submission from their strongholds, as they realize the futility of fighting against this powerful king. Similar pictures are described in both Egyptian and Assyrian texts.[53]

Interpretation: vv. 38–46

This section thus concludes the main body of the psalm, completing the reversal of the king's plight described at the beginning of the psalm. In contrast to vv. 5–6 where he is hemmed in on all sides, overwhelmed and nearly overcome, the king is now boasting of his victory, and we see him in action, confidently crushing his opponents. The warrior king is painted in full strength: a picture of ultimate control and supremacy. In contrast, his enemies, in retreat, are sinking and helpless. Now, his might is known to all and they bow before him in humble submission.

Words and Pictures in Verses 47–51

Verse 47

YHWH is alive indeed!	חַי־יְהוָה
Blessed be my rock	וּבָרוּךְ צוּרִי
And exalted be the God of my salvation!	וְיָרוּם אֱלוֹהֵי יִשְׁעִי

These three bold statements of praise mark the transition from the victory narrative to the concluding hymn of praise. They also reverberate with the motifs of rock and salvation from the opening verses, where the psalmist expressed his trust in YHWH in the midst of his distress and declared YHWH to be worthy of praise (vv. 3–4).

---

[53] E.g. *ANET* 255; 374; *ARAB* 2: 78 §149.

The phrase חי־יהוה occurs as an oath formula ('by the life of YHWH . . .' / 'as YHWH lives . . .') 43 times elsewhere in the HB, although that does not seem to be its use in Psalm 18. Uniquely to this psalm, it is followed by a doxology. While this does not preclude a translation which reflects an oath formula,[54] it seems more likely from the context that it is simply a declaration and also a celebration of YHWH's living power to save and give victory.[55] The form of the expression has an interesting parallel in KTU I.6. III.8.20, where 'El declares that Ba'al has come back to life: *k ḥy ali'yn b'l*, 'For 'Aliyān Ba'al is alive'. Rather than seeing this expression as evidence of the psalm's underlying cultic drama,[56] however, it seems much more likely that it is part of the psalm's polemical thrust.[57] In the Baal cycle, the declaration that Baal is alive is made in conjunction with the 'evidence' of this in the fertility of the land: 'the heavens rain oil and the wadis run with honey' (KTU 1.6 III.12–13).

In the HB the focus on YHWH as a living God is associated with his presence and action. Jer 10.10 stands out particularly in relation to Ps 18: YHWH is proclaimed as the living God and everlasting king, whose wrath makes the earth shake (רעש cf. Ps 18.8) and nations cannot withstand his indignation (cf. also 1 Sam 17.26, 36; 2 Kgs 19.16–19). Ringgren's survey of passages containing the expression אל חי / אלהים חיים 'living God' confirms this association between the description of 'the living God' and one who is present and who actively intervenes.[58]

This association should inform the discussion about whether this verse contains a declaration 'YHWH is alive!' or the expression of a wish 'May YHWH live!'[59] Dahood considers חי to be a precative perfect akin to the biblical expression which is proclaimed by the people at the inauguration of kingship: יחי המלך 'May the king live!' (e.g. 1 Sam 10.24; 2 Sam 16.16; 1 Kgs 11.12).[60] In English this is often translated 'Long live the king!'—an acclamation which seems to be both a confirmation of the king's new

---

54 Cf. Cross and Freedman 1953: 34.

55 The oath formula perhaps emerged from—and is therefore dependent upon—this established and celebrated characteristic of YHWH. By analogy to the expression חי פרעה (Gen 42.15), the incontrovertible fact of YHWH's 'aliveness' makes it a powerful basis for an oath.

56 *Contra* Widengren 1955: 69. This view has already been criticised by Kraus (1993: 265f).

57 Cf. Vriezen 1958: 171.

58 Ringgren 1980: 338–9 (e.g. Deut 5.26; Josh 3.10; 1 Sam 17.26).

59 Grammatically, חי could be an adjective or perfect qal (see BDB 310b). The LXX has instead the present tense, ζῇ κύριος, cf. Vg. *vivit Dominus*.

60 Dahood 1966: 118, cit in Schmuttermayr 1971: 185.

status and an expression of desire for his life (and therefore also for his reign) to be long. However, the desire for YHWH to 'live' is necessarily different from a wish for the life of a king, since nowhere in the HB are we led to believe that YHWH might die. It is therefore not an expression of desire, but an acclamation of homage, akin to יהוה מלך—'YHWH is king!' (e.g. Ps 93.1).[61] 'Living' is being used here to emphasize the efficacy of his action in a similar way to pleas for God to metaphorically 'rise up' from sleep (cf. Pss 3.7; 7.6; 9.19, etc).[62]

Since victory in battle was regarded throughout the ancient Near East as confirmation, and sometimes even legitimization, of kingship, it is perhaps surprising that Psalm 18 does not make a more overt reference to YHWH's kingship. One might perhaps expect a declaration such as יהוה מלך following the report of victory—instead we have a declaration of YHWH's vitality. It is YHWH's active presence and power that is foremost in the psalmist's mind, perhaps making an implicit contrast with other gods who are not 'alive' (v. 42). This is not to say that YHWH's kingship is not in evidence as an underlying conceptual model, but that it is not the primary focus of praise here. The king's victory and elevation to head of the nations is proof that YHWH alone is a living God (חי), a rock of strength and protection (צורי), who has the power to act and secure victory and widespread dominion for the king over his enemies. YHWH's actions—evidence of his living reality—are the basis of the psalmist's exhortation to praise. J. L. Mays describes this as the 'theological climax' of the psalm: 'The entire psalm is praise of the God who acts'.[63] YHWH, superior to the gods of his enemies (who have failed to act), is powerfully active in history, as the one who protects and saves.

The second phrase וברוך צורי occurs only here (and in 2 Sam 22), although the expression ברוך יהוה is found several times in contexts of thanksgiving for deliverance and victory (e.g. Exod 18.10; 2 Sam 18.28; Pss 31.22; 124.6).[64] While this blessing formula is commonly found in cultic texts, its original *Sitz im Leben* appears to have been thanksgiving for God's saving acts.[65] Here, uniquely with צורי (probably under the influence of v. 3), the psalmist gives thanks for God's presence as his rock—the source of his strength, protection and salvation. The parallelism of צורי and ישעי

[61] Cf. Ridderbos 1954; Kapelrud 1963; Lipinski 1963.
[62] Cf. Widengren 1955: 67f.
[63] Mays 1994: 90.
[64] Cf. also Ps 72.18.
[65] Cf. Scharbert 1975: 305.

with חי reinforces the double-thread of the king's experience of God's presence in his life which runs throughout the psalm: his experience of refuge and rescue on one hand, and victory on the other.

The verb רום creates a range of conceptual associations and engages several other 'frames' from the rest of the psalm. It occurs twice in the last few verses of the psalm (cf. v. 49), ensuring that the spatial symbol of 'height' is duly emphasized. For the king, 'height' is the place of YHWH's presence and safety (vv. 3, 17), the place of rescue and victory (vv. 3, 34, 40, 49), and finally, the place of domination (vv. 44, 48). This expression skilfully draws out an analogy between God and the king, reminding us of the king's victory and exaltation to the position of ruler over the nations (v. 44). While it is the king's exaltation that is narrated, it is YHWH's 'exaltedness' that makes this possible.

But in theological terms, what does it mean to declare that God is 'on high' or 'raised up'? The most high God, עליון, is king over all the earth (Ps 47.3) and exalted far above other gods (97.9). In Ps 46.11 God declares that he is exalted among the nations: ארום בגוים ארום בארץ. In terms of the grammatical form and its meaning, if the psalmist was simply acknowledging that it is YHWH who is exalted above all one would expect the indicative רם, (cf. e.g. Isa 57.15; Ps 99.2), and the imperative רומה if it was an exhortation to YHWH to exalt himself (cf. Pss 21.14; 57.6, 12). In light of its juxtaposition with וברוך צורי it is much more likely that ירום here is a hymnic jussive—'Exalted be the God of my salvation'.[66] It is not a declaration of what will be in the future (cf. Num 24.7), as if God is yet to be exalted or is yet to 'rise up' (cf. Isa 30.18), but a call to praise this God. This reveals a very close relationship between 'raise' and 'praise'. A similar sentiment is expressed in the prayer of lamentation to Ishtar: 'Ishtar indeed is exalted; Ishtar indeed is queen'.[67] For YHWH to be exalted is for people to recognise him and praise him as the most high God. The king is affirming and calling for people to recognise that the God of his salvation is to be acknowledged as the one with authority over all the earth and all the nations.

In parallel with צורי, אלוהי ישעי draws together for the last time the psalm's main focus on the relationship between God and the king and leads into the final rehearsal of what God does and has done for him (v. 48 האל 'it is God who . . .'). God is the cave, the hiding-place in whom he trusts (v. 3), the refuge like none other (v. 31), and the source of all his

---

[66] Cf. Firmage, Milgrom, and Dahmen 2004: 404; cf. LXX ὑψωθήτω.
[67] *ANET* 385, cf. Schmuttermayr 1971: 185 n. 30.

strength, manifest in his deliverance and victory. Interestingly, all other BH occurrences of the expression 'God of my salvation' are found in contexts of petition and need (e.g. Mic 7.7; Hab 3.18; Ps 25.5). Its occurrence in a doxology in Psalm 18 could suggest that this expression is another part of Psalm 18 which reflects an established or conventional part of Israel's theological testimony.

This verse also draws us back to the polemical song of vv. 31–33, with the repetition of אלהים in collocation with צור and האל in the following verse. The psalmist continues his answer to the question from v. 32: 'who *is* this God?'—YHWH is a living God, a God who protects and saves, the one who is my rock and my shield. This is expanded in the following two verses: he is also the one who has placed nations under me and lifted me up above my enemies.

Verse 48

הָאֵל הַנּוֹתֵן נְקָמוֹת לִי	*It is God who gives me just vengeance*
וַיַּדְבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחְתָּי	*and subjects nations under me*
(2 Sam 22 וּמוֹרִיד עַמִּים תַּחְתֵּנִי)	(*and brings nations down under me*

The verb נתן is a prominent word in the latter half of the psalm, describing the king's manifold gifts from God, of safety (v. 33), protection (v. 36), and victory (v. 41). It is God who gives justice and salvation (vv. 26–8). It is God who gives the king his enemies and puts them under his feet. The idea of military or political success, expressed as נקם, can also be found in Judg 11.36, describing Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites (cf. also Josh 10.13; 1 Sam 14.24). The verb נקם 'to avenge' predominantly occurs with God as subject and is frequently described as belonging to YHWH (יהוה נקמת, e.g. Num 31.3; Jer 50.15), yet נקמות (pl. of intensity) is also something that can be given by God to others (נתן, e.g. Num 31.3; 2 Sam 4.8; Ezek 25.14, 17), or accomplished for them (עשה e.g. Judg 11.36).

It is difficult to find an adequate translation of נקם and yet it forms part of a significant web of theological associations. In a detailed exegetical study of the root and the function of vengeance within the context of Old Testament Theology, H. G. M. Peels summarizes the problem that exists in a number of modern languages: 'In contemporary language usage the term 'vengeance' has acquired a pejorative connotation through its affiliation with self-centred, illegitimate and even immoral action'.[68] In English, 'vengeance' therefore falls far short of expressing the Hebrew lexemes

[68] Peels 1995: 1.

נקם/ נקמה, which are semantically associated with justice, righteousness and salvation as well as with anger and recompense (e.g. Isa 35.4; 59.17–18; Ezek 25.14; Mic 5.14).

The contemporary understanding of the English word 'vengeance' is that it is a personal and highly subjective form of justice (often perceived as immoral and violent), far removed from the legal sphere. The concept of anger remains attached to the idea, but this is very rarely (if ever) perceived as holy or righteous anger. In BH, by contrast, נקם is occasionally a private or an individual matter (e.g. Exod 21.20; Judg 15.7; 16.28), but applies predominantly to a nation and its enemies (e.g. Num 31.2; Josh 10.13; 1 Sam 14.24). Peels has demonstrated that there are in fact only a few cases where נקם is used in a negative sense of 'vindictiveness' when there is no legitimate authority for the vengeance.[69] He concludes that נקם primarily expresses a positive idea of retributive justice, and can describe action in warfare. Its meaning is 'determined by the notion of a legitimate, righteous, even necessary enactment of justice by a legitimate authority'.[70]

Peels discusses several passages which express vengeance in terms of justice in the context of war (Josh 10.13; Judg 15.71; 16.28; 1 Sam 14.24; 18.25; Est 8.13). In the course of this discussion, he refers to a significant metaphorical model or root metaphor which has a huge bearing on Ps 18: the 'YHWH-war' as lawsuit (cf. the description of YHWH's saving deeds as צדקות in e.g. Judg 5.11; 1 Sam 12.7).[71] Although Peels does not describe it in terms of 'models', he certainly alludes to further associations of this particular metaphorical model. The understanding of 'war as lawsuit' takes its place in a large and complex system of associated metaphorical models, including 'YHWH as judge', 'deliverance as righteousness', 'military victory as divine judgement / punishment', etc. Since the language of justice and violence is used in contexts of national conflict, social oppression, and individual persecution (e.g. false accusation, slander, etc.), each of these conceptual 'frames' can act as a metaphorical model. For example, in battle contexts, God is described as שפט 'judge' when deciding the victor of a battle (e.g. Judg 11.27, 36; 2 Sam 18.19, 31). The verb קום is used of military opponents rising up in preparation for battle as well as in the context of malicious witnesses rising up, e.g. Pss 27.12; 35.11.

---

[69] Cf. Lev 19.18; Pss 8.3; 44.17; Lam 3.60 and Jer 20.10 (Peels 1995: 43–61).
[70] Peels 1995: 265.
[71] Cf. Zimmerli 1978: 50, and Kang 1989: 194–196 (cit. in Peels 1995: 92).

Psalm 140 provides an excellent example of this 'frame-shifting' between legal and military metaphors. Military and legal metaphors collide and merge together (vv. 3, 6, 8), such that it is difficult to identify whether the underlying situation is a military one or that of individual persecution. Violence in all its forms provokes YHWH's judgment (e.g. Gen 6.13; Judg 9.24; Mic 6.12–13; Hab 2.17) and it is the same God to whom victims of violence appeal for deliverance (e.g. Jer 11.20; 15.15; 20.12; Pss 79.9–10; 94.1–2).

In Psalm 18, alongside the strong imagery of YHWH as warrior, this lens of vengeance brings the character of YHWH as righteous judge more closely to the surface, recapitulating the theme of the central section of the psalm. If one looks at Psalm 18 through the lens of the Hebrew semantic field of נקם, and its associated web of metaphorical models, some interesting threads of the psalm's message come to light. In this psalm it is the same God to whom the psalmist cries for deliverance (v. 4), who judges the king's enemies in anger by driving them away (vv. 8–16), who rewards the righteous (vv. 21–5), delivers the humble and brings down the haughty (v. 28), and gives the vengeance of victory to the king (v. 48). It is YHWH's role as judge that unifies the various sections of the psalm: the king's distress triggers YHWH's wrath (vv. 8–16), which is evident in cosmic disturbances; the king's rescue is understood in the light of YHWH's delight in his righteousness (vv. 21–25);[72] YHWH is a God of justice and salvation (vv. 26–8). It is in this light that the king's victory over his enemies is to be understood as 'vengeance' (v. 48).

The unusual use of וידבר has caused some disagreement among commentators, and, although it is clear from the context that some form of subjection is meant, the precise nuance of the word remains elusive. The same form is also found in Ps 47.4, in a similar context of God bringing nations into submission to Israel: וידבר עמים תחתינו.[73] The repetition of תחתי is no doubt a deliberate reminder of vv. 39–40, where

[72] נקם is related semantically to גמל (v. 21) and שוב hi. (v. 25), cf. Isa 59.17–18.

[73] LXX has ὑποτάσσω 'to subject, subdue' in both places (cf. also Ps 144.2), cf. Aram דְּבַר (af.) 'lead', cf. *HALOT* I, 209b 'to drive away'; although Mid. Heb. דָּבַר (hi.) is also attested in *Makkoth* 11ª 'to make submissive' (Jastrow 278a); or Arab. *dabara* 'turn the back, retreat', so hi. 'put to flight' (cf. Driver 1931: 250–7; 1934: 382; Dahood 1966: 118 "made nations bend their back beneath me"). Various modes of defeat seem to be in view in other cognates, e.g. Akk. *dubburu* / *duppuru* 'to drive away'. *DCH* II 396, lists this occurrence under דבר II 'destroy, subdue' along with Ps 47.4 and 2 Chr 22.10 (cf. אבד pi. in the parallel passage in 2 Kgs 11.1), distinguishing this sense from דבר III 'turn the back' and דבר IV 'drive out, pursue'.

we are presented with images of crushing defeat—of the enemies falling under the king's feet and of God bowing them down (כרע hi.) under his feet. However, this verse functions as a summary not just of the battle narrated in vv. 39–40 but also of its effects described in vv. 44–46, since the subjugation of nations to the king's headship is clearly regarded as a concomitant effect of his victory. Since the annihilation of enemies in one battle leads to other nations capitulating (vv. 44–46), it seems likely that וידבר conveys the sense of 'bringing into subjection', which is supported by תחת.[74]

In a similar vein, 2 Sam 22.48 reads ומֹרִיד 'and who brings down' (ירד hi.)[75] and 4QSam[a] together with Ps 144.2 (dependent on Ps 18.48), has הָרֹדֵד 'who subdues' (רדד).[76] These alternatives could both be intentional emendations to a more familiar verb, indicating that the *lectio difficilior* וַיְדַבֵּר perhaps preserves the original text.

Verse 49

Who rescues me from my enemies	מְפַלְטִי מֵאֹיְבָי
Indeed, you lift me out of reach from my adversaries	אַף מִן־קָמַי תְּרוֹמְמֵנִי[77]
You deliver me from men of violence	מֵאִישׁ חֲמָס תַּצִּילֵנִי

Grammatically, v. 49 continues the description of האל in v. 48. As a complement to the summary of victory and domination in the previous verse, the psalmist now returns to the language of deliverance, in a final reflection on the king's general experience of divine help. The LXX and Vg. interpret this verse as a statement of confidence in God's *future* help. I have chosen to translate it with a present tense, since the implication is that this divine support and help is continuous. The king is drawing conclusions from the help he has received in this particular battle victory to his general experience, hence the use of אף: 'Yea! You (Lord) always do this for me!' God is the one who always brings him to safety, lifts him up, and rescues him from all threats against him.

The divine epithet, מפלטי, recurs for the last time, echoing the description of rescue from conflict in v. 44, and, together with v. 3, envelops the psalm with praise to 'my deliverer', who saves him from his enemies when

---

[74] This would allow for an intensification of this meaning in the piel in 2 Chr 22.10, i.e. to subjugate/subject all the way to death = 'to destroy'.

[75] Cf. e.g. Ps 59.12.

[76] LXX 2 Sam 22.48 reads παιδεύω 'to chasten, discipline'.

[77] 2 Sam 22 reads ומוציאי מאיבי ומקמי תרוממני.

he calls for help (v. 4). As mentioned above, the root פלט usually conveys escape from danger and arrival to a place of safety. God is the one who removes him from the danger of his military opponents, by lifting him up out of danger, a conceptual reminder of vv. 17–18. The psalmist plays on קום and רום, painting a vivid picture of God lifting the king up high, away from his adversaries—those who rise up against him (קמי). The *NLT* brings out this sense: 'You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies', conveying the distance and height of those trying to grasp at him. The enemies, those who rise up against the king, are the ones who can no longer rise, and above whom the king is now exalted in power. The picture of height as safety is presented for the last time, fully exploiting the flexibility of רום to kaleidoscope the images of height that have been painted throughout the psalm. Thus the king's deliverance to a high place converges with the king's 'exaltation' to the head of many nations (v. 44), and is associated with the one who is exalted (v. 47).

The final part of the verse presents some difficulties. At first sight it seems superfluous or out of place in the descriptions and reflections on divine deliverance. Several commentators have explained it away by re-locating it to v. 44 or attributing it to a later editor.[78] However, I think there is not only a case for retaining it in its current position but that there are also good reasons for reflecting on its inclusion in the psalm, whether it is original or not.[79] Although נצל (hi.) has appeared in v. 18, the description of enemies as איש חמס is new. The phrase only occurs a few times in the HB and this has led to confusion about its use in Psalm 18.

How are these 'men of violence' portrayed elsewhere? In Prov 3.31, there is an admonition not to envy איש חמס nor to choose their ways, for the crooked (נלוז) are an abomination to YHWH. In its wider context, these violent men are associated with רשע 'the wicked', לצים 'liars', and כסילים 'the foolish', and are contrasted with ישרים 'the upright', צדיקים 'the righteous', עניים 'the humble' and חכמים 'the wise' (vv. 32–35). In Prov 16.29, איש חמס is listed among those whose words stir up trouble and cause harm: איש בליעל 'a scoundrel' (v. 27),[80] איש תהפכות 'a perverse man' and נרגז 'a whisperer' (v. 28). While the former instance of איש חמס

[78] For the former, see e.g. Cross and Freedman 1953: 33 n. 98; for the latter, see e.g. Kraus 1993: 265.

[79] As Schmuttermayr argues, we cannot overlook the fact that both recensions of the psalm have the verse in exactly the same place.

[80] Cf. other places where איש בליעל is associated with speech that causes harm, trouble or confusion (e.g. 1 Sam 1.16; 10.27; 25.17, 25; 30.22; 2 Sam 20.1; 1 Kgs 21.10, 13; Prov 6.12; 19.28).

seems to be a very general term, the latter seems much more narrowly associated with slander and false accusation (cf. the use of חמס in e.g. Exod 23.1; Deut 19.16; Ps 7.17).

The only other occurrence of the expression is found in Ps 140, which, as discussed above (in relation to נקם in v. 48), uses an interesting juxtaposition of war imagery with legal imagery to portray the psalmist's (the king's?) situation of persecution by enemies. Here, איש חמסים (an intensive plural) stands in parallel with אדם רע 'evil men' / 'evildoers' (v. 2) and איש חמס with איש לשון 'slanderers' (v. 12). Towards the end, the psalmist's appeal for divine help is made on the basis of YHWH's role in executing justice for the עני 'humble' and אבינים 'poor' (v. 13), cf. Ps 18.28.

In the light of Prov 16.29 and Ps 140.12, it is understandable that some scholars have interpreted איש חמס in Ps 18.49 as 'slanderers', and it is this evident discontinuity that raises questions about its integrity within the psalm.[81] Within the literary context of 2 Samuel, reflecting on David's life and his various battles, איש חמס could certainly be understood alongside מריבי עם in v. 44 as a reference to troublemakers on the 'inside', to 'calumniators'.[82] However, as we noted above in v. 3, 2 Samuel 22 has a long addition to Psalm 18, introducing the image of חמס right at the beginning of the psalm: מחמס תשעני 'you save me from violence'. Thus, in the context of 2 Sam 22, v. 49c appears as an intentional echo or inclusio of an idea from the psalm's opening rather than the introduction of a new idea of slander.

This variation in 2 Sam 22.3 strikes a dissonant chord in the context of epithets of praise that convey the psalmist's intimate relationship with YHWH and requires further explanation. If, by the time the psalm was incorporated into 2 Samuel, the use of איש חמס was considered to be unusual in a battle context (presumably because of its frequent use in contexts of slander) and in need of further explanation, it seems conceivable that מחמס תשעני was added to v. 3 in order to integrate v. 49c more fully into the psalm and to aid its interpretation.

Again, recourse to metaphorical models can shed light on this. In v. 3 it was observed that the semantic range of חמס spans a number of different contexts: juridical contexts (mentioned above), contexts of social injustice (e.g. Isa 59.6; 60.18), and also physical violence and destruction on a national level (e.g. Jer 13.22; Ezek 7.11; Hab 1.9). This feeds into, and

---

[81] Cf. Haag 1980: 484.
[82] Dahood 1966: 119.

is illuminated by, the discussion of the root metaphor 'war as law-suit' (in v. 48): such is the fluidity between different conceptual 'frames' (legal, military, social) that the semantic co-ordinates of justice and violence, which in this case include a description of the perpetrators of the violence, can move freely between each of these 'frames'. Given the usage of חמס in contexts of physical and national violence, the most straightforward explanation of the 'men of violence' in Ps 18.49 is that it refers to the king's military opponents, those who seek to destroy him and his country. Both the portrayal of YHWH as a divine warrior in vv. 8–16 and the focus on military training and victory in the latter half of the psalm speak against the interpretation of איש חמס in Psalm 18 as 'slanderers'.

Verses 50–51

Therefore I will give you thanks, YHWH, among the nations	עַל־כֵּן אוֹדְךָ בַגּוֹיִם יְהוָה[83]
and sing praises to your name	וּלְשִׁמְךָ אֲזַמֵּרָה
who magnifies the victories of his king	מַגְדִּל יְשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכּוֹ
and shows loyalty to his anointed one	וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לִמְשִׁיחוֹ
to David and to his seed for ever	לְדָוִד וּלְזַרְעוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם

This declaration of praise is formally linked to the preceding verse by על־כן 'therefore': YHWH has rescued the king's life and given him victory and the king has just affirmed his trust that YHWH will continue to rescue him in times of need. Therefore he will give YHWH thanks and praise. It is difficult to assess whether this is a straightforward promise to declare YHWH's power in the presence of those he has conquered—בגוים—fitting the context of vv. 44–46, or whether it is another example of the psalmist's exuberant hyperbole: 'I will praise you *everywhere*!' There is a vow to praise YHWH among the nations in two other psalms, in the context of prayers for deliverance and appeals to God's faithfulness and universal sovereignty (Ps 57.10–12 = Ps 108.4–6). שם functions here as a metonym for YHWH (cf. Pss 61.9; 66.4).

Verse 51 echoes the participles in vv. 33–35 and 48–49, forming a satisfying conclusion to the psalm. It looks back again to the core of the psalm—the king's righteousness and YHWH's faithfulness—and then looks out at the wider impact of the king's relationship with YHWH and of his deliverance and victories, to the everlasting Davidic dynasty.

[83] Alternative word order in 2 Sam 22 יְהוָה בַּגּוֹיִם.

In light of the preceding narrative, גדל (hi.) seems to have a qualitative sense: YHWH grants overwhelming victories to the king (cf. 1 Sam 14.45), such that there is no doubt about his strength and power. The pl. ישועות covers the quantitative dimension of his success: there have been many such decisive victories. ישועה is used frequently in psalms that celebrate military victory and its choice here echoes the repetition of the root ישע throughout the psalm (vv. 3, 4, 36, 42, 47).[84] These mighty acts of deliverance and victory are understood as part of God's חסד towards his anointed one (cf. the collocation of חסד with ישועות in Pss 13.6; 98.2–3).[85] This reminds us once again of the central section of the psalm, which tells us not only that this deliverance and victory was given by YHWH in response to the *king's* חסד (vv. 21–25, particularly v. 26: עם חסיד תתחסד), but also because YHWH is perfectly just (cf. e.g. Pss 36.6; 89.50).

The two references to the king, מלכו 'his king' and משיחו 'his anointed', accentuate the closeness of his relationship with YHWH. The same two nouns also occur in Hannah's song (1 Sam 2.10), where it is clear that being chosen as YHWH's king and anointed one is closely associated with divine protection and favour (cf. e.g. Ps 2.2; Hab 3.13; 1 Chr 16.22; 2 Chr 6.42).The king belongs emphatically to YHWH, for it is YHWH who has chosen the king (cf. 1 Sam 16; 2 Sam 23.1, 5; Pss 2.6–8; 21.4–5). משיח is an example of a lexicalized metonym, deriving from the use of the verb משח to refer to the anointing of kings with oil (e.g. 1 Sam 9.16; 1 Kgs 1.34), which became a powerful symbol of divine commission and authority.[86]

In the context of Psalm 18, this particular designation reflects the king's special relationship with YHWH, which entails protection and refuge (cf. Ps 28.8), the king's victories in battle (cf. Ps 20.7) and his role in strength and power as head of the nations (cf. 1 Sam 2.10; Ps 89.21–28). Although there is no explicit mention of ברית 'covenant', as one might expect (cf. 2 Sam 23.5; Pss 89.4, 29; 132.12), the final line of the psalm declares that this is not just an isolated act of חסד. This relationship of trust, refuge and strength is as timeless and universal as YHWH's victory over chaos. The mighty deliverances and victories granted to David are a guarantee of an everlasting line on the throne (cf. 2 Sam 7.12–16; 23.1–7; Pss 89.29–38; 132.11–12).

---

[84] Cf. e.g. Pss 20.6, 7–10; 118.14–15.
[85] Cf. Clark 1993: 156–158.
[86] Seybold 1998.

The term זרע to denote 'descendants' is an intriguing figure of speech (rarely mentioned in commentaries), as it reveals a large web of associated metaphorical models which share underlying analogies between agricultural and biological life, fertility and growth. More specifically, it points to an underlying conceptual model of 'reproduction as sowing'. This web involves metaphorical relations between 'seed' and 'semen' (e.g. Gen 38.9; Lev 15.16) and, by metonymy of causation, between 'seed' and 'offspring' (e.g. Gen 3.15; Job 5.25). To refer to one's descendants as 'seed' expresses the continuation of one's life in them and the solidarity of a shared history. As Preuss describes, 'the fates of an ancestor and his offspring constitute a single chain'.[87] However, the concept of 'seed' also bears theological weight, as it is intimately related to God's promises to Israel and to her kings (e.g. Gen 12.7; Exod 32.13; 2 Sam 7.12; Ps 21.11). In Psalm 18, it stands in collocation with משיח, expressing confidence that YHWH's unfailing promises to David will continue into the future, and are an integral part of the divine history of judgement and salvation.

Interpretation: vv. 47–51

These verses not only provide the final snapshots of the psalm but also recapitulate in dense polyphony the main themes and motifs of the psalm: YHWH as the king's rock, YHWH as the God of justice, the king not only delivered from his enemies but exalted above their heads, and that of YHWH being exalted and praised as the one who bestows blessings of victory and steadfast love to David and his descendants.

These themes and motifs, as well as the psalm's portrayals of YHWH and the king will be explored further in the following section, which looks at the patterns which emerge from the psalm as a result of a focus on its metaphors and an evaluation of the theological and cosmological images that interact throughout the psalm.

[87] Preuss 1980: 161–162.

CHAPTER NINE

INTERWOVEN THREADS IN PSALM 18

A closer look at the metaphors and some of their underlying conceptual models in Psalm 18 has revealed that although several of its strophes are quite different in form, style and content, there is a remarkable unity to the psalm. This is largely due to the interplay between particular words and images used throughout the psalm. The following section will draw together the themes and motifs that have been observed throughout the exegesis and will explore the implications of this for the psalm's compositional unity, along with the question of the psalm's message(s) and function.

Metaphorical Interplay

The interactions between the psalm's words and pictures can be seen most clearly from four different perspectives, although there is inevitably some overlap between them: i) the king's relationship with YHWH; ii) spatial models and metaphors; iii) the actions of YHWH; and iv) the portrayal of the enemies.

The King's Relationship with YHWH: Strength as Metaphorical 'Glue' in Psalm 18

The opening metaphor, unique to Psalm 18, אֶרְחָמְךָ יְהוָה חִזְקִי 'I love you, O YHWH, my strength!' (v. 2), not only sets the psalm firmly in the context of a close personal relationship, but also provides one of the primary hermeneutical lenses for understanding metaphors of God in the rest of the psalm. It illustrates the potential for a two-way process of interpretation, as it both guides, and is informed by, the meaning of subsequent metaphors—or, in Harshav's terms, it sets up a central 'frame of reference' for the psalm. The theme of strength is used to establish connections between the king's deliverance in the first half of the psalm, his gift of power and victory in the second half, and the meditation on justice and righteousness that stands in the centre.

The images of God as a place of refuge and protection and as a shield in v. 3 invite the reader to 'see' divine presence with the king as a source of

strength, stability, refuge and protection. They are not only declarations of praise for what God does for him but they also function as declarations of trust: *YHWH* is the one in whom he seeks refuge. The semantic fields of these iconic word-pictures suggest that there is an ethical dimension to the declaration of YHWH in these terms, which comes to the surface in the central section of the psalm. There are also strong associations of salvation in v. 3, not only in the appellation of YHWH as the king's 'deliverer', but also in the enigmatic expression 'horn of my salvation'. The association with trust is picked up and reflected back by the word-pictures involving rock and shield in the second half of the psalm: 'He is a shield for all who seek refuge in him' (v. 31). Further connections are established in the second half of the psalm, with the metaphor 'you have given me the shield of your salvation' (v. 36), and with the juxtaposition of 'rock' and 'God of my salvation' (v. 47). These express confidence and praise in YHWH as the one who is the source of the king's victory and power.

In the theophany, although YHWH's strength is not mentioned explicitly, the collage of images depicts him as a mighty warrior, gaining a decisive victory over his enemies, who are blasted away by his breath (v. 16). The narrative that follows refers to YHWH's strength, both directly and indirectly: the description of the king's enemy as 'too strong for me' (v. 18) is juxtaposed with a word-picture of YHWH as the king's משען his 'staff' (v. 19), and a description of liberation to a broad place (v. 20), highlighting YHWH's superior strength. Depicting YHWH as the king's staff offers another vivid image of the firmness, strength, and reliability of YHWH's support. YHWH gives him the courage and unwavering support he needs to face the advancing enemies, and strength to withstand the attack. The reason given for this deliverance is that YHWH 'delighted in' him: YHWH's support, strength, and saving help are given because of his delight in the king (v. 20).

The central section of the psalm explains this 'delight' further, framing the king's obedience to the commandments as grounds for divine favour and deliverance in battle (vv. 21–25). According to the underlying models of right behaviour as walking on a particular path, and of YHWH's commandments and judgments as paths, 'keeping the paths' means not only to obey God's laws and the way of life 'prescribed' by God, but also to stay in his presence, contrasted with 'acting wickedly away from God', implying a departure from his presence (v. 22). As part of the celebration of YHWH's justice and righteousness, the king declares his own experi-

ence of God's just action towards him, in vivid images of YHWH as the one who lights his lamp and the one who illuminates his darkness (v. 29), followed by two hyperbolic boasts of superhuman strength (v. 30).

In the exegesis it was noted that 'lamp' and 'light' occur frequently in metaphors expressing God's presence and protection, and that they have close semantic associations with divine salvation and help, military victory, and righteousness. The focus of these verses, in the light of vv. 2–3, is that when the king is in darkness—a situation of need, vulnerability, and danger—he trusts in YHWH to light his lamp. He is rewarded for this choice with the light of YHWH's reassuring and encouraging presence, which leads him to victory. Thus he can boast in the following verse, 'With you I can charge at a whole troop, and with my God I can leap over a wall!' It is God's presence with him that enables him to do this, which resonates strongly with the declaration of YHWH as his 'strength' in v. 2. These two verses (vv. 29–30) firmly cement the stark declaration of righteousness at the centre of the psalm to the king's deliverance and victories in battle on either side. It is precisely because he trusted in God as the source of his strength and kept God's 'ways' that God delighted in him (v. 20), rescued him, and gave him great triumphs (v. 51).

The king's own experience of God's justice is therefore not only that he has been rescued from darkness and supported in times of need, but that he has been rewarded for his faithfulness with superhuman strength in battle. The second half of the psalm is dominated by images of the king's strength, dependent upon YHWH alone. YHWH is the one who girds him with strength (vv. 33 and 40), who gives him a strong military position on the heights (v. 34), who trains his hands for battle (v. 35), who supports him with his right hand (v. 36), and who not only gives him resounding victory in battle, but also exalts him over other nations (v. 44).

The statement 'I love you, O YHWH, my strength' in v. 2, together with v. 3, thus provides a fitting overture to the whole psalm, setting up one of the central themes that is developed throughout. It communicates a deep level of intimacy, dependence and trust: God's presence and relationship with him is so close that it seems tangible, as if his very body and mind are imbued with divine strength. As a window into the psalm, it speaks of the king's utter dependence on YHWH for his salvation, the protection of his life, the gift of his military might and his victories, and, more importantly, it underscores his *choice* of YHWH as his source of refuge and protection, evinced by his unswerving adherence to God's commandments.

The Double-Helix of Protection and Empowerment, Deliverance and Victory: Spatial Models and Metaphors

The vivid orientational metaphors in the psalm that emerge from the vertical model of height and depth and the horizontal model of width and narrowness, have understandably drawn attention from commentators and scholars.[1] However, the degree to which these are employed and the subtle ways in which certain metaphors interact has proved worthy of further consideration. What is often overlooked is that by engaging the same orientational model, metaphorical transference is facilitated from one word-picture to another. Thus, metaphors expressing protection, safety and deliverance, come to inhabit the same orientational—and therefore conceptual sphere—as victory and salvation. The God who delivers is the same God who exalts. Furthermore, since God's dwelling-place is 'located' in the heights of heaven, it compounds the idea that God's presence is with the psalmist when he is 'high up'. Significantly, the enemies are never pictured in the heights, although the רמות עינים 'lofty eyes' (v. 28) are brought down.

The psalm's spatial focus begins in the heights, with images of natural and man-made refuges in v. 3—places with the advantage of height for safety and protection. The narrative of the king's distress then swings down to the depths of the earth, to images of a victim submerged by waves of death and destruction (v. 5), trapped and surrounded by the snares of the underworld (v. 6). The psalmist's cry rises up to YHWH's ears in heaven and YHWH responds by descending (v. 10) and swooping down to attack his enemies (v. 11). The theophany concludes with a focus on the depths of the earth, where the beds of the sea have been exposed by the blast of YHWH's breath (v. 16). In the following verse YHWH is portrayed as reaching down and pulling him out of the water, echoed visually in v. 49 'you lift me out of reach of my adversaries'. Amidst this vertical movement, we encounter the horizontal: the king's cry of distress comes from a narrow place of being trapped on all sides, of being surrounded and confined. The idea of a restriction of freedom is picked up specifically in v. 7 by צר, and developed by the contrasting image of מרחב, a 'spacious place', in v. 20. YHWH thus liberates the king not only from the depths, from the 'mighty waters', but also releases him from the things that were restricting and confining him, and leads him to open ground where there is freedom of movement.

[1] Notably Kuntz 1983: 25–28.

The second half of the psalm expands on both of these spatial conceptual models, as the focus shifts from deliverance to victory, from God's supporting strength to withstand the 'strong enemy', to the mighty strength of salvation that leads to military supremacy. YHWH establishes the king on his home turf, on the heights (v. 34), a place of military advantage that conceptually anticipates his exaltation to 'head of nations' (v. 44). The king's 'broad place' of deliverance is echoed linguistically in v. 37 where his steps are 'widened' in battle—giving him stability and freedom of movement. In the account of the king's battle against his enemies the reversal of the king's previous position is completed, as now the enemies are unable to rise, falling under his feet (v. 39), bowed down under him (v. 40).

What is fascinating about these two spatial models is that they both operate on more than one level. If the two sections, vv. 2–20 and vv. 34–49, were treated independently, only one level of meaning would be obvious. Thus, in the first half, height would represent safety, protection and deliverance, width would express liberation; depth would symbolize the cosmic forces of death and destruction, and being confined would express general distress and danger. In the second half, height would represent military victory, strength and power, and depth would symbolize defeat, death, and subordination. When viewed within the same textual unit, however, one set of spatial imagery interacts with the other, such that they are conceptually 'superimposed' upon one another. The double level of cosmic and military imagery then also impacts the identification of the enemies with cosmic forces, and the identification of the king's 'location' with God's presence and strength.

The spatial and conceptual 'eliding' of protection and deliverance with military might and victory is reinforced by the interaction and convergence of two particular images at key points in the psalm. 'Book-ending' the psalm is the iconic metaphor of God as the king's 'rock', but with the metaphorical interplay of the 'shield' image in v. 31 taking its place in a metaphor about seeking refuge, its conceptual associations shift from those of refuge and protection to those of salvation and victory. The verb חסה thus 'telescopes' the images of shield and rock in their roles of protection and refuge and through the conceptual association of trust. The shield is later described as the shield of YHWH's salvation (v. 36), which simultaneously alludes to the gift of defence and protection in battle, and also to YHWH's help that secures the king's victory. Finally in v. 47, YHWH is exalted as the king's rock and as the God of his salvation. This metaphorical interplay between rock and shield allows the 'double-helix' of the

psalm's genetic make-up to emerge, that of protection and empowerment, rescue and victory, deliverance and salvation, which intricately connects the two halves of the psalm together.

It remains to look at the spatial conceptualisation in the central section of the psalm. While it may seem obvious that the reversal of the vertical and horizontal positions of the king and his enemies is all directed by God, it is the central section of the psalm that anchors this movement firstly in the king's, and then in YHWH's, righteousness. The king's righteousness is framed as 'keeping the ways' of YHWH (v. 22), a horizontal conception of ethical behaviour as walking along a path, characterized by YHWH's presence (vv. 22, 24). This is picked up again in the description of YHWH's 'way' as perfect (v. 31) and again in the description of YHWH making the king's way perfect (v. 33), which provides the conceptual point of intersection between the reflections on righteousness and the descriptions of the king in battle that occupy the focus of the second half of the psalm—his 'way' into battle.

Therefore, YHWH is not only portrayed as the most high God, El Elyon (v. 14), the one who comes down from heaven (v. 10), and the one who reaches down and lifts the king out of danger (v. 17), but he is also the one who ensures justice: 'For it is you who deliver a humble nation and bring down haughty eyes' (v. 28). Again through the use of a spatial model, with the juxtaposition of deliverance with 'bringing down', the psalmist identifies the king with those who are humble, and the enemies with those who are proud. The king therefore represents the עם עני, which, in the context of vv. 21–27, are those who are faithful to the commandments, those who walk uprightly—they will be raised up, while those who are proud will be brought down. Thus the king can declare in v. 48, 'It is God who gives me just vengeance and subjects nations *under me*' and further in v. 49, that he is exalted over his adversaries (תרוממני). This identification of deliverance with victory, and of the king with the humble, functions to legitimize the actions of the king in battle, by adding moral weight to YHWH's gift of victory to the king.

Seeing the Enemies as Forces of Chaos: The Chaoskampf Motif

The conceptualisation of the psalmist's distress in vv. 5–6 as being overwhelmed on all sides by the threatening and predatory forces of death and Sheol, sets up a significant interpretative frame for understanding the identity of the king's enemies in the psalm. Unidentified 'enemies' are mentioned in v. 4 and not again until v. 18. It may seem surprising, then, that the Canaanite myths of Baal's victory over Yam (sea) and Mot

(death), and the Babylonian myth of Marduk defeating the goddess Tiamat (the chaotic primeval waters), are frequently cited in commentaries on Ps 18.5–6.[2] The question of whether the language of 'torrents', 'death', and 'Sheol' in these verses is a deliberate allusion to YHWH's *Chaoskampf* is a moot point. A closer look at the interplay between the psalm's metaphors that describe the king's enemies reveals that *Chaoskampf* motifs are employed within a powerful complex of conceptual models.

In a list of references to the subjugation of the cosmic waters by YHWH, Adrian Curtis puts a question-mark next to Psalm 18 (along with Pss 32, 42, 46 and 124).[3] There are two indicators that support this hesitancy: firstly, there are no mythological creatures mentioned in Psalm 18 (in contrast to Pss 74, 89, etc); secondly, the terms used to describe YHWH's primeval battle against watery chaos elsewhere are typically ים, תהום and נהר, rather than נחל (or משבר in 2 Sam 22).[4] What is intriguing about vv. 5–6 is that although the linguistic indicators for the *Chaoskampf* motif are not particularly strong, the conceptual indicators (waves, death, torrents, Sheol) are certainly there. However, the 'waves' and 'torrents' of v. 5 are not opposing YHWH, but overwhelming the psalmist, which suggests that the primary focus is not on YHWH's battle against chaos *per se* but on the identification of the forces overpowering the king as cosmic forces of destruction, death and chaos. The poet thus exploits the ambiguity of word-pictures to suggest or allude to the *Chaoskampf*, but it is not until vv. 16–17 that the undertones of vv. 5–6 are distinctly heard.

The depiction of the king's enemies as forces of destruction, chaos, and death, is picked up boldly in v. 16 with the images of water channels and the world's foundations being laid bare. This is confirmed in v. 17, where the psalmist's enemies are identified with the מים רבים, the 'mighty waters' of chaos. The fact that there is no mention of YHWH's kingship being established as a result of the battle or victory, unlike other contexts in which the 'subjugation of the waters' motif is more prominent (e.g. Ps 74), confirms that the *Chaoskampf* itself is not in focus. Rather, it is the identification of the king's enemies as forces inimical to YHWH, and thus also the identification of YHWH's cosmic battles with the king's earthly battles.[5]

---

[2] E.g. Kraus 1993: 260; Craigie 2004: 173–4.

[3] Curtis 1978: 255.

[4] The only reference to נחל in a creation-mythological context in the HB seems to be Ps 74.15. In Qumran texts, however, all 12 refs to נחל are cosmological or eschatological, e.g. 1QH 3.29, where נחלי בליעל describe the devastation caused by evil.

[5] The suggestion by Tsumura (2005: 149–151) and Watson (2005: 83) that any notion of *Chaoskampf* allusions should be dispensed with in the interpretation of Ps 18 goes too

There are other lexical indicators that strengthen this metaphorical transference between the king's enemies and the forces of death that are threatening the king's life in vv. 5–6. For example, the description of the enemies in v. 19 uses the verb קדם (pi.), which clearly echoes the action of the snares of death in v. 6, and highlights the visual and conceptual connections between them. In the second half of the psalm there is an image of the king's enemies coming trembling from their strongholds (v. 46), which conceptually interacts with the earth trembling in v. 8. Just as the angry approach of the mighty warrior-god YHWH causes the earth to tremble, so the nations tremble in fear at the reports of the mighty warrior-king.

Through the models of 'military battle as a storm' and 'YHWH as a devouring storm-god-warrior', the psalmist is able to engage the model of the king's battle as a *particular* battle that was fought by this indomitable storm-god: the battle against chaos and death. This facilitates metaphorical transference between the king's historical enemies and YHWH's cosmic ones.[6] This is evident in a number of Psalms (e.g. Pss 46.3; 65.8; 124.4–5) and in the 'mythologising' or 'metaphorizing' of Egypt as Rahab (Pss 87.4; 89.9–11; Isa 30.7; 51.9–10). In a comparative assessment of ancient Israelite and Assyrian military ethics, Carly Crouch aptly describes this conceptual framework, also evident in neo-Assyrian royal ideology, as the 'synergy of Yahweh and the king in warfare', and the 'synergy between the king's military endeavours and Yahweh's original creative battle against chaos'.[7] The ethical implications of this will be discussed further below (see section below, 'war as lawsuit').

In a discussion about conceptions of historical war as a cosmic battle or mythological portrayals of the enemies, Othmar Keel observes that a 'historicization' of myth 'simultaneously represents a mythicization of history'.[8] This seems to be another way of talking about the bi-directionality of this metaphorical model of the king's battle as YHWH's *Chaoskampf*. Within this model, either the sea (or dragon) in the mythical conflict is 'redescribed' in terms of human opponents, or the human enemies are painted in mythological colours as chaotic and destructive forces.

---

far. The focus of water imagery in Ps 18 is not simply the danger posed to the individual, but engages a mythical allusion in the service of a broader cosmological conception of enemies as chaotic forces.

[6] Cf. Mowinckel 1962a: 1. 164.

[7] Crouch 2009: 70, 72.

[8] Keel 1978: 107.

But the theophany is not merely a fanciful redescription of a reality: the two battles are intimately related. There is ontological truth behind the model: the historical battles are understood to be, in a real sense, a continuation of, or participation in, the cosmic battle.[9] YHWH alone can punish and slay the dragon (Isa 27.1) and set a boundary for the sea (Ps 104.6–9) and so YHWH alone can defeat the nation's enemies, tearing down kingdoms and deposing their rulers. This is why language about 'demythologisation' can be unhelpful, as it could suggest that the cosmic significance has been lost. For example, John Day writes, 'when employed to denote foreign nations it [the symbol of chaos waters] has clearly attained the status of poetic metaphor',[10] which forms part of his explanation of how that the *Chaoskampf* motif developed into *Völkerkampf* motif.[11] However, his interpretation of the *Völkerkampf* motif serves to show that it is not just a literary 'motif'. A 'poetic metaphor' is not a weak and watered-down version of a mythological symbol. If anything, it communicates the cosmic significance of earthly, historical battles and connects them to the heavenly ones. It is not a de-mythologisation so much as a mythical metaphorisation based on the model of 'earthly battle as cosmic battle'.

The mythical 'redescription' of rescue and aid in battle thus offers an explanation for the use and survival of theophanic language throughout the HB and beyond.[12] It seems that any historical event which was interpreted as some form of *Chaoskampf* (e.g. the Exodus deliverance, individual or corporate acts of rescue, including battle victories), that is, perceived to be part of a divine battle against chaos, could be portrayed with theophanic imagery. The event or events of rescue, deliverance and military victory are understood to have cosmic significance and to reflect the unique relationship between YHWH and Israel. The event of YHWH coming and delivering the king in battle by destroying his enemies, mediated by mythical images of YHWH as warrior and storm-god as well as *Chaoskampf* motifs, therefore became symbolic not only of YHWH's incomparable might (v. 32) but also of YHWH's covenant relationship with the king (and the importance of the king's righteousness—vv. 21ff.) and of his steadfast love to David and his descendants (v. 51).

---

[9] Cf. Ortlund's discussion of the Chaoskampf myth (Ortlund 2010: 16–27).

[10] Day 1985: 188.

[11] Day 1985: 183ff.

[12] Mary Hesse's term 'redescription' is used by Ricoeur in his discussion of parables (Ricoeur 1987) and the function of metaphor (2003: 287, 361).

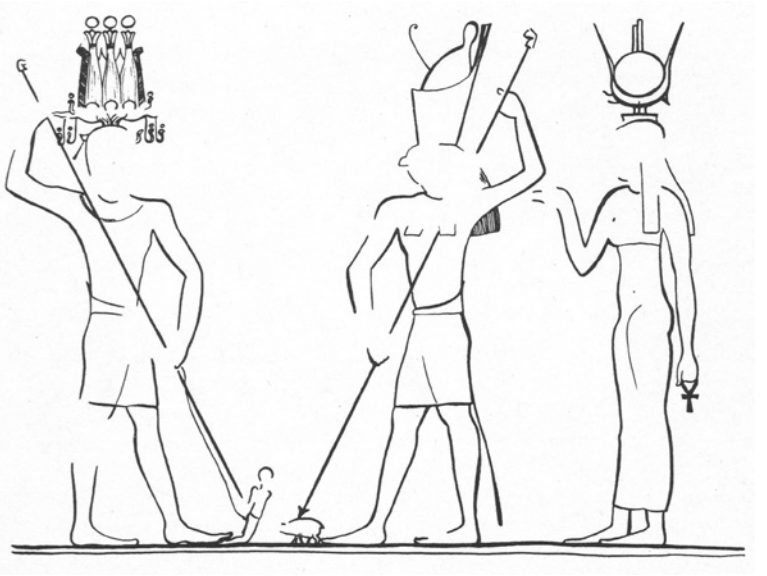

Fig. 14. A depiction of the Egyptian god Horus stabbing the wild boar of Seth (a symbol of chaos and destruction) with a spear, assisted by the goddess Isis. The Pharaoh is simultaneously piercing a human enemy with a spear, demonstrating Pharaoh's part in Horus' cosmic battle against the forces of destruction (Keel 1978: 109, fig. 144).

Mythical metaphorisation is also evident in iconographical depictions of historical events.[13] The sandstone relief (above) from 107–88 BCE demonstrates the power and durability of such ideas. Keel writes 'The power of Horus is active in the king and in the two spears, both of which terminate in falcon-heads. So too, both *adversaries* manifest one and the same power *inimical* to life.'[14] In the same way, the enemies of YHWH are both cosmic and historical: due to the relationship between YHWH and the king (the representative of Israel), an enemy of the king becomes an enemy of YHWH. A similar relationship is the basis of the hope and pleas for intervention in Psalms 77, 144 and Hab 3 (cf. also the re-use of Psalm 18 in DSS non-canonical psalms 4Q381 fr.24 a+b5). This process of mythicizing history (or more simply put, 'seeing' historical battles 'as' cosmic, divine ones) recognizes and affirms the ongoing reality and intrusion of

[13] E.g. the depiction of Tukulti-Ninurta II taking the role of a storm-god and defeating threatening chaos: a serpent representing the rebellious Aramean city of Laqe (Keel 1978: 108, fig. 142).

[14] Keel 1978: 109 (original italics).

chaos, evil and death into life, and enables the psalmist (or the prophet) to celebrate, plead with and hope in a God who has the power to save.

War as Law-Suit: YHWH as Judge and Warrior

YHWH's iconic portrayal in the theophany as a mighty storm-god and devouring warrior occupies such a prominent place in the psalm that it is easy to overlook other interconnecting divine roles and actions. However, in the theophany itself, motifs of YHWH's judgement are inextricably connected to the description of his advent, anger, and actions against the enemies. An examination of the semantic associations of the word-pictures in the theophany revealed that the idea of divine judgement is closely associated with the images of the earth shaking (v. 8), the smoke and fire (v. 9), hail and fiery coals (v. 13), thunder (v. 14) and his battle-cry (v. 16). YHWH's anger, one of the distinctive features of this psalm's theophany, is framed in vv. 20–31 in the context of righteousness and justice in response to the plight of the king, and of YHWH's relationship with him. Verses 20 and 21–25 connect the king's deliverance with the idea of recompense in accordance with his righteousness, and of YHWH's judgement, 'according to the cleanness of my hands *in his sight*' (v. 25).

Following further reflections on YHWH's justice in terms of faithfulness, integrity, and blamelessness (vv. 26–27), which stand at the heart of the psalm, there is a general summary statement of YHWH's sovereignty in judgement: 'For it is you who delivers a humble nation and brings down haughty eyes'. This strongly evokes a conceptual frame of legal protection and the model of YHWH as the legal champion of the poor. The king is thus identified with those who in their humility are dependent on YHWH for protection and who put their trust in him, and YHWH's actions are framed as just deliverance for the oppressed. The choice of the unusual expression ריבי עם (v. 44) to describe 'national conflicts', from which YHWH delivers the king, also uses language that would normally be associated with the law-court. Against this background, the gift of victory to the king is expressed as 'just vengeance' (v. 48), 'a legitimate, righteous, even necessary enactment of justice by a legitimate authority'.[15] Thus YHWH's actions of deliverance and vindication for the king are identified with YHWH's role as judge, with the implication that the battles waged by the king can be seen as a lawsuit.

As was highlighted in the exegesis of v. 48, the understanding of 'war as lawsuit' is part of a complex of associated metaphorical models, including

[15] Peels 1995: 265.

'YHWH as judge', 'deliverance as righteousness', 'military victory as divine judgement / punishment', etc. These underlying models are confirmed in the following verse by a description of the king's enemies as 'men of violence' (v. 49), language more commonly found in contexts of social oppression and false accusation. Identifying the fluidity between different conceptual 'frames' (legal, military, and social), and the potential for metaphorical transference between all three, can therefore have a huge impact on the translation and interpretation of particular words in the psalm.

It is not only the flexibility and interaction of metaphorical word-pictures that warrants close attention in a psalm, but also the interplay between different conceptual models. Thus, enemy attack can be seen in the same light as false accusation, persecution, social injustice, and oppression. The military enemy can be seen as all that is opposed to justice (forces of violence, destruction, death, chaos) and all that are opposed to YHWH (the proud, the wicked, the haughty, etc). The king in Psalm 18 can therefore be identified as the righteous one, the one who trusts in YHWH rather than relying on his own strength, the one who follows YHWH's ways, and who, in his distress, is identified with the humble, poor and oppressed. YHWH acting as a warrior is therefore ultimately seen as part of his role as judge in defending the poor and oppressed against the forces of death, destruction and chaos. The defeat of the king's enemies can be seen as the outcome of the law-suit: their judgement and punishment, and the king's victory as reward for his trust and faithfulness.

This returns us to the underlying royal ideology of warfare in the ancient Near East discussed earlier in relation to the *Chaoskampf* motif. In an exploration of the ethical justification of military violence in the ancient Near East, Crouch argues persuasively that acts of war were grounded in an identification of social order with cosmic order, so that in Assyrian royal ideology, 'To destroy the chaotic enemy is not only a matter of the preservation of Assyrian order, but part of a much wider existential struggle for the preservation of the universe itself'.[16] As such, subduing the enemy was regarded as 'a matter of moral imperative', and the level of violence required to maintain the empire was legitimated through 'the conflation of the political with the ethical'.[17] Thus the enemy's opposition to Assyrian rule was portrayed as 'sin' and 'wickedness' that posed a threat to the cosmic order.[18]

---

[16] Crouch 2009: 27.
[17] Crouch 2009: 28; 50.
[18] Crouch 2009: 51–52.

Crouch outlines a parallel military ideology in Israel and Judah, which provides the conceptual background for the king's engagement in battle as a 'defence of order', reflecting the divine battle against chaos.[19] In Psalm 18 the central declaration of the king's innocence (vv. 21–25) and subsequent identification of the king with the עם עני in contrast to the עינים רמות (v. 28) and the איש חמס (v. 49) serve to align, and therefore legitimate, the king's actions with the moral order. This leaves open the possibility of a propagandistic function of the psalm, asserting the king's authority and granting a divine moral 'stamp' on his military activities.[20] As such it provides a good reason for the psalm's inclusion in the appendix to the Books of Samuel.

The Concentric Pattern of the Psalm

Being attuned to the interplay between particular words and pictures within a psalm often brings broader concentric patterns to the surface, which would otherwise remain hidden. The theme of strength and the spatial motifs of height and depth recur in patterns throughout the psalm, framing the central theme of righteousness and justice and the focus on the relationship between YHWH and the king.

A) Address of praise to YHWH as strength, rock and deliverer (vv. 2–3)
  B) Trouble: in the depths (vv. 4–7)
    C) Theophany: YHWH as warrior crushing enemies with strength (vv. 8–16)
      D) Deliverance from strong enemy and divine support (vv. 17–20)
        E) Righteousness of the king: grounds for deliverance (vv. 21–25)
        E[1]) Righteousness / justice of YHWH (vv. 26–28)
      D[1]) Divine gift of strength; trustworthiness of YHWH (vv. 28–32)
    C[1]) King as warrior with YHWH's help, crushing enemies with strength (vv. 33–42)
  B[1]) Deliverance from trouble: exaltation over enemies (vv. 44–46)
A[1]) Praise to YHWH as rock and deliverer (vv. 47–51)

[19] Crouch 2009: 29–32.
[20] Cf. Mann 1977: 105.

A Re-assessment of Psalm 18's Unity

This overview of metaphorical and conceptual interplay strongly suggests that the question of the psalm's unity should be re-addressed, particular in regard to vv. 8–16 and 21–32.

Verses 8–16

As we noted in chapter 3, a wide variety of scholars have cast doubts over the congruence of vv. 8–16 with the rest of the psalm. In addition to the arguments forwarded earlier, the analysis of theophanic metaphors strengthens the view that the theophany was incorporated in the original composition and not added by a later redactor. The theme of YHWH's anger which underlies the theophany provides one of the hermeneutical lynchpins for the psalm as a whole. YHWH's reaction to the king's plight testifies to YHWH's intimate concern for the psalmist, and confirms his role as shield and deliverer (vv. 2–3). It also accentuates YHWH's desire for justice, and the cosmic implications of the king's earthly battles. The reaction of nature to YHWH's presence is a foretaste of the impact of the king's might on his military enemies (vv. 38–43).

Alongside this primary level of interpretation, there are at least two other messages communicated on a secondary level, which were explored above. Firstly, it is clear that whoever is an enemy of the king is an enemy of YHWH, and secondly, that the king was successful in his historical, earthly battle(s) because YHWH first had victory over chaos, which is spelt out more clearly in the second half of the psalm. It is thus only by virtue of YHWH's power and might that the king is powerful and mighty. The theophany is therefore integral to the message of the whole psalm, and is neither an editorial afterthought nor simply a piece of poetic embellishment. It is a deliberate use of particular mythological imagery to reflect the king's experience of YHWH's protection and aid and to emphasize the cosmic significance of YHWH's action in the context of this relationship.

Verses 21–32

The bold, hyperbolic portrayal of a morally blameless king with divinely bestowed powers that we meet at the centre of the psalm is in many ways quite in keeping with the grandiosity of the rest of the psalm. However, the apparent change in tone, style, and content of this section has led to much speculation about its unity with the rest of the psalm and the possible redactional purposes it might serve in terms of the Psalter as a whole. It

distinguishes itself from the rest of the psalm in terms of its key-words and motifs, introducing several new ideas and images, particularly צדק, דרך, and תמים. However, the exegesis of this section revealed that these motifs are skilfully interwoven with each other, eliciting conceptual associations from other words and word-pictures elsewhere in the psalm.

Arguments against the originality of this section fall roughly into two categories: lexical arguments and thematic or conceptual arguments. Within the section itself there are lexical connections between תמים (v. 24) and the description of גבר תמים (v. 26), and also between בר (vv. 21, 25) and ברר (v. 27). These would indicate that vv. 21–25 should not be isolated from vv. 26–30 in terms of redactional layers (*pace* Hossfeld and Zenger),[21] although clearly a good 'patch-worker' could have used such lexical threads to weave the two together. Gunkel identifies the use of language in vv. 21–25 as 'deuteronomistic', on the basis of the words משפטים, חוקת, שמר and סור מן.[22] However, there are several factors that suggest otherwise.

Firstly, as noted in the exegesis of v. 22, the use of שמר with דרך is not typically deuteronomistic, but does occur frequently in exilic and post-exilic literature (e.g. Gen 18.19; Mal 2.9; Job 23.11). Secondly, the terms חקות and משפטים are not exclusively found in Deuteronomy and the Dtr history, but also in Ezekiel and the Holiness Code (e.g. Ezek 5.6; Lev 18.5, 26). Thirdly, the phrase describing laws being 'set before' someone in Deuteronomy and the Dtr history typically uses לפני rather than לנגד which we find in v. 23. Finally, the textual variant in v. 23 (אסיר in Ps 18 and אסור in 2 Sam 22) could indicate an intentional redaction in 2 Samuel 22 to bring v. 23 in line with conventional deuteronomistic language and the conceptual model of law as a pathway. Arguments concerning dating on the basis of linguistic factors are inevitably fragile, as diachronic linguistic and semantic developments are notoriously difficult to identify with any precision. However, it seems likely that this passage was composed in the broad vicinity of deuteronomic ideas, but a late pre-exilic dating should not be ruled out.

The question of thematic indicators that the passage is another 'Fremdkörper' confirms this general time-frame. Although the explicit connection between righteousness and fulfilling commandments tends to be found predominantly in exilic or post-exilic texts (e.g. Deut 6.25;

[21] Hossfeld and Zenger 1993: 122.
[22] Gunkel 1926: 64.

Isa 48.18; 51.7; Ezek 18.5–9),[23] particular words, phrases and ideas do not simply emerge in a vacuum, and it seems plausible that such associations between righteousness and moral piety in terms of obeying laws could have been made in the late pre-exilic period. This suggestion is strengthened by the literary parallels from the ancient Near East, which exhibit a wide-spread conceptual relationship between faithfulness, morally upright behaviour and obedience to divine laws on one hand, and divine judgement in terms of reward or punishment on the other. This is particularly evident in the letter from Sargon noted in the exegesis on vv. 26–30, which has a striking parallel to Psalm 18 in terms of its emphasis on trusting in his god for strength and the subsequent narration of victory in battle.[24]

In conclusion, it seems most likely that vv. 21–32 were composed by (or for) a righteous king in Judah in the broad vicinity of Deuteronomic ideas. This suggests either Hezekiah or Josiah. What is unclear is whether the psalm existed in any form prior to this composition, or whether parts of previous psalms were knitted together. Although a discussion of righteousness is not out of place in the context of the psalm's concern for the special relationship between YHWH and the king, the psalm would be quite coherent without vv. 21–32. The significant change in tone and style marks it out within the whole psalm as an explanatory 'bridge' between YHWH's deliverance of the king and the description of divine aid in battle and victory. Even so, as the discussion of the theme of strength has shown, the psalm has been skilfully crafted in such a way that it displays thematic and theological unity throughout, and one should hesitate before attributing it to a later editorial hand.

Metaphors in a Different Frame: The Purpose(s) of Psalm 18

This thesis has been concerned primarily with analysing the words and pictures within Psalm 18 as a 'frame-less' psalm, aside from its context within Psalms 15–24 or the wider literary framework of the Psalter. This has enabled the internal world of the psalm to speak for itself and to show the connections between words and pictures within the world of the text. The analysis of the psalm supports the hypothetical *Sitz im Leben*, that the psalm could have been composed for the celebration of a military victory,

[23] Cf. Koch 1976a: 515.
[24] *ARAB* 2: 81 §153–154.

but there are other discernible threads within the psalm that could lend itself to other purposes.

Drawing out the potential 'messages' of the psalm is a fascinating task, and one that highlights how malleable metaphors are for fulfilling different 'performative functions'. The opening lines of the psalm (vv. 2–3), for example, have an emotive force which could serve a number of purposes in different contexts: they could function as an appeal to YHWH to be the king's strength and refuge (on the basis of past experience), that is, they could fulfil a persuasive function; they could also have a laudatory function, praising Yahweh for his support, strength and action on his behalf. In the context of a royal thanksgiving for victory, the latter is more likely. However, it is also possible to discern a paraenetic function of these verses. If one regards the psalm within its literary context of Book I of the Psalter, and particularly within the sub-group of Psalms 15–24, this declaration could be seen as an encouragement to others, that YHWH will be faithful to those who trust in him for their strength, and to those who seek refuge in him. This resonates with the message of v. 31 which could also fulfil a paraenetic function: Trust in him! Choose him as your source of refuge and strength! Keep to his paths and you will be protected!

In 2 Samuel 22, on the other hand, the metaphor 'YHWH is my rock' in the wider context of the books of Samuel, communicates that David was an ideal king, one who trusted in YHWH as his refuge and strength. Verse 1 sets up an interpretative frame that leads the reader to understand the psalm as a thanksgiving sung by David on a particular day of deliverance, but its placement immediately preceding David's final words enables the psalm to function literarily as a reflection on all of David's military accomplishments.

Another example is the king's confession of innocence at the centre of the psalm (vv. 21–25). Within the 'frame-less' psalm we have seen how this section provides an essential connection between trusting in YHWH for strength and ethical obedience to YHWH's commandments, by introducing the conceptual model of right behaviour as walking on a particular path, which is characterized by God's presence. This lends itself to the concerns of the group of Psalms 15–24, which seem to be expressed in an editorial 'frame' of cultic purity with torah at the centre.[25] Psalm 18 is exemplary in highlighting the matrix of images of both refuge (vv. 3, 31, 32, 47) and pathway (vv. 22–23, 31, 33), which, when juxtaposed with

[25] Cf. Allen 1986: 544–46; Mays 1987: 8; Creach 1996: 80.

Psalm 19, allows an inter-psalm metaphorical transfer between the king as the ideal or 'archetypal' righteous man who seeks refuge in YHWH,[26] and the one who follows torah. Thus, as Brown describes, Psalm 19 'democratizes' David: his military pursuits and victories (Pss 18, 20, 21) can thus be interpreted in, and overshadowed by, the light of Psalm 19, and God's integrity is reflected in the integrity of torah (Pss 18.26–27, cf. 19.8–10).[27]

In the Books of Samuel, such a declaration of innocence could serve to highlight David as the ideal king, who is faithful to the covenant (cf. Deut 26.13ff). It also emphasizes the righteousness of the king in contrast to his enemies, who are opposed to this moral order, and thus contributes to a legitimization of the king's military actions. This theme of the king's righteousness and the ethical legitimization of war is already apparent within the 'frame-less' psalm, as we have seen in the discussion of the *Chaoskampf* motif earlier on, but this potentially propagandistic function is drawn out further when read in the context of 2 Samuel. Here it serves to put a positive 'spin' on David's life, which reinforces the message that 'YHWH's purposes were accomplished through David'.[28]

[26] Von Rad 1950: 424.
[27] Brown 2010: 275.
[28] Watts 1992: 106.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS

In response to William Brown's call to study the 'iconic structure' of a psalm, this study has set out to demonstrate the importance of a dynamic understanding of metaphor interpretation within a particular textual unit, Psalm 18.[1] Using the working definition of metaphor as an 'analogical word-picture', the meaning of each word in the text has been considered as a potential source of verbal or pictorial interaction, with the ability to engage or activate certain conceptual associations within its own or another 'frame of reference' or 'mental scene'. From a lexical semantic perspective, the associations of particular words have been explored through an examination of their semantic range and semantic fields in the HB. From a cognitive semantic perspective, the potential *image*-fields of certain word-pictures have also been examined, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the ancient Israelite conceptual models that were underlying, or evoked by, the word-pictures. Wherever possible, the construction of word-fields, image-fields, and metaphorical models was aided by extra-biblical sources of information such as iconographical or literary parallels from the ancient Near East.

Such a detailed process of metaphor-focussed exegesis has been extremely fruitful and has generated three main observations, some of which have implications for biblical metaphor studies in general, and others for future Psalms studies:

1. Paying due attention to metaphor as an 'analogical word-picture' helps to focus exegesis on the level of particular words, of the image(s) they create, and on the underlying model(s) or analogy created or engaged by the metaphor.

In the theoretical discussion of metaphor it was observed that part of the distinctive nature of the verbal art presented by a metaphor is that it is based on, and can also create, conceptual models. The term 'model' has been used in this study to describe the analogical relationship between the picture presented by the metaphor and the words used to paint the

[1] Brown 2002: 14.

picture. In several cases, identifying the underlying analogy has helped to clarify the image and therefore also the message expressed by the metaphor, e.g. the personification of death and Sheol as hunters in vv. 5–6, the violence communicated by גלה in v. 16, and the military associations of being brought into a broad place in v. 20. In each case it was particular words, their lexical fields and their image-fields that led to an understanding of the analogy. In some cases, a sharp focus on the image created by the word-picture also affected the translation. In v. 45, it was suggested that כחש should be understood figuratively as 'shrink' rather than 'cringe'. This is supported by the surrounding imagery describing the enemy and also by the spatial (up-down) theme that runs throughout the psalm.

In other cases, the process of trying to understand the image highlighted how much the contents of both target and source domains were dependent upon information or referents provided by other words and images from within the same psalm, e.g. the understanding of חזקי in v. 2 and the particular associations of 'lighting a lamp' in v. 29. It also confirmed the validity of a complementary theory of meaning, which involves an interdisciplinary approach to biblical exegesis such as exploring parallel word-pictures and images elsewhere in the HB and in other ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography. In v. 11, the enigmatic appearance of YHWH riding on a cherub was understood in terms of a symbol of divine presence and the common ancient Near Eastern conceptual model of military attack as predatory flight, supported by iconographical representations of deities on winged creatures. This interpretation challenged the temptation either to gloss both word-pictures in the verse as synonymous parallelism, or to equate the symbol of the cherub with a chariot or throne. Rather than seeking to explain away 'awkward' images, like the cherub in Psalm 18, it is important to look at the particular contribution made by the words the poet has chosen. In this case the word-pictures emphasize speed, predatory flight and intent to attack.

A study of particular words and the images created by them also opened up the possibility of defending a couple of textual differences between Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22—in order to explain how or why an emendation may have been made. For example, in v. 43, the expression על־פני רוח was shown to be coherent with images elsewhere of 'threshing' the enemy, in contrast to the image of 'stamping down' in 2 Samuel 22 כעפר־ארץ. Similarly, the puzzling occurrence of אריקם (rather than אדקם in 2 Sam 22) could be explained in relation to other images of 'emptying out' the enemy as waste in the context of defiling enemy corpses.

A focus on the interaction between models within a text can be of vital importance in making sense of a series of related metaphors and can give deeper insight into the poet's choice of particular words. Probing the interrelationship between the models of 'battle as storm', 'anger as fire', and 'fire as judgement' in the theophany (vv. 8–16) led to the identification of two main figures that underpin descriptions of YHWH in this section: the mighty storm-god and the devouring warrior-god. This resolved the apparent tension between fire and storm imagery in the theophany: the terrifying power and destruction caused by fire and storm make them ideal source domains for metaphors describing battle. This power and terror is magnified exponentially when they are imbued with divine presence, will, and strength, which is evident in the conflation of these two common figures that are evident in a range of ancient Near Eastern literature.

However, although a deeper understanding of conceptual metaphorical models can be illuminative, they must be used carefully to avoid silencing the individual messages of particular word-pictures. The discussion of the specific associations of each metaphor in v. 3 makes it difficult to see how or why they are often collapsed into a single metaphorical model. Both Creach and Brettler subordinate the metaphors in this passage to the umbrella of 'kingship' and the king's role of sheltering and protecting his people.[2] While this model can account for a large number of the conceptual associations created by the word-pictures, there is no explicit mention made of YHWH's kingship in the immediate context. Models should only be highlighted if labelling them adds to the interpretation of the text, as some labels run the danger of squashing the surplus meaning of the metaphors, and of preventing the unique contribution of individual words to speak life into each word-picture.

> 2. When seen through the eyes of its word-pictures, seemingly unrelated threads of a psalm can therefore display a surprising level of interaction and integrity. A psalm has the potential to communicate a variety of messages, but some of these remain in obscurity unless its word-pictures and their interplay are examined in detail.

In the previous chapter, several dimensions of this 'interplay' were explored: the theme of strength that binds the psalm together, vertical and horizontal spatial models, the portrayal of the enemies as chaotic forces, and the divine roles of warrior and judge. What emerged strongly was the role that the underlying conceptual models played in emphasizing the

[2] Creach 1996: 53–55; Brettler 1989: 58.

righteousness of the king and thus legitimizing his military actions. The focus on the relationship of trust and loyalty between the king and YHWH, and on the cosmic significance of threat to the king allowed the king's victories to be framed in terms of justice and the ongoing cosmic battle against chaotic and threatening forces. Exploring the degree to which consistent thematic threads could be identified throughout the psalm led to a re-assessment of the psalm's unity, and to the conclusion that there were no compelling grounds to regard either vv. 8–16 or vv. 21–32 as later insertions. Unpacking the interplay between different word-pictures also facilitated an overview of the psalm, which highlighted the potential for different aspects to be drawn out by the two different literary frames of the psalm: the Psalter and the Books of Samuel.

3. The semantic elasticity and ambiguity of metaphors that gives them the potential to fulfil a variety of informative and performative functions enables them to operate within different literary and historical contexts. This must be taken seriously when engaging with Psalms interpretation, particularly in discussions of literary unity, and when considering the literary 'frames' of a psalm. An understanding of the 'openness' of word-pictures can lead to a greater appreciation of the Psalms as both liturgical and literary texts. It can also facilitate dialogue between different interpretations of the Psalms.

The discussion of the purposes of Psalm 18 in the previous chapter explored how different 'frames' can influence the interpretation of the psalm, just as a red or blue frame affects the appearance and overall effect of a painting. Although this thesis has focussed primarily on a 'frame-less' psalm without a particular literary frame, the process has highlighted the significance of 'gap-filling' in the interpretation of a psalm's word-pictures—what the reader brings to the metaphor from his or her world-experience in order to make sense of it. One of the aims of the thesis was to offer an interpretation which had consistency within the psalm's own internal field of reference.

One example highlights in particular how the assumption of a different external field of reference can affect interpretation at the level of the word. In Ps 18.31: אמרת־יהוה צרופה can be understood either as a reference to YHWH's sure promise to the king of victory in battle, or as a reference to torah. The former is supported by those who consider this verse to be concerned with divine help and support in battle,[3] the latter by those

[3] E.g. Kraus (1993: 263), who calls it an "oracular directive".

who regard this verse as a later interpolation.[4] If it is the work of a later redactor it is done incredibly skilfully, as it alludes to the psalmist's cry for help in v. 4 and is ambiguous enough to be 'at home' in the psalm's military context as well as God's 'word' in the sense of torah. If one reads the psalm without a frame or within the books of Samuel, one might be more inclined to prefer the former interpretation (in the light of salvation / victory oracles in e.g. 1 Sam 23.2; 30.8; 2 Sam 5.19) and the latter if we read it in the Psalter. Or, on closer inspection of the redactional intentions both of the Psalter and of the books of Samuel, one might conclude that a torah interpretation of this verse was understood by both. What this study demonstrates is that holding open the possibility of different interpretations in some cases does proper justice to a psalm as an evolving liturgical and literary text.

Future Avenues of Research

This study has modelled an approach to Psalms exegesis which is focussed on the interaction of words and pictures within a 'frame-less' individual psalm and what this reveals about its structure, purpose, and theology. It would be interesting to see whether this approach is equally fruitful when applied to a range of psalms. What is interesting about the history of Psalms study is that almost all approaches to the Psalms appeal to something *outside* of the individual psalms themselves, that is, to an external context, or 'field of reference'—they just differ in terms of what that 'field' is:[5] the 'fields of reference' governing pre-critical approaches to the Psalms are the events in David's life as recorded in the Books of Samuel; in form-critical approaches the fields of reference are understood in terms of the reconstructed 'forms' or liturgical 'templates' of psalm composition, or the occasions of worship—the reconstructed cultic or non-cultic *Sitze im Leben* of the Psalms; the synchronic approach of canonical criticism appeals primarily to the Psalms' literary field of reference (i.e. the shape of the Psalter) while also begging questions about another field, the hypothetical *Sitz im Leben* of the redactor(s); finally, the 'emotive' or reader-response approach appeals instead to the personal context of the

[4] E.g. Hossfeld/Zenger (1993: 120), who consider vv. 26–32 to be part of a post-exilic "Armentheologie".

[5] The exception being Rhetorical Criticism, which concentrates on the final form of the poetic text.

reader of the Psalms as the external field of reference. Proper engagement with metaphor is a *sine qua non* in any one of these approaches, but it can also help to build bridges of meaningful dialogue between different approaches to Psalms interpretation by acknowledging the potential for a variety of external realities as a basis for metaphorical 'gap-filling'.

The working definition of metaphor as 'an analogical word-picture', and an approach to exegesis which relies on a complementary theory of meaning that relies on lexical semantics, pragmatics and cognitive semantics, will hopefully also provide a more user-friendly model for the study of metaphors in biblical texts in general. Due consideration of how particular words and pictures interact within a text has the potential to reveal underlying conceptual models that were previously obscured, to shed light on the purpose of an individual metaphor or textual unit, to identify theological or other themes that connect a textual unit together, and in some cases to resolve or explain a particular textual difficulty or variant. It would also be interesting to pursue a study of how conventional images in the Psalms are taken up and parodied or inverted in the prophetic literature. Building up a range of studies on 'image-fields' to complement those that focus on lexical fields will hopefully increase our ability to read biblical word-pictures with imagination, and to properly engage with the realm 'where the verbal is vassal to the non-verbal'.[6]

[6] Ricoeur 2003: 254.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aalen, S. 1974 (repr. 1979). 'אוֹר' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 1 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 147–67.

Aaron, D. 2001. *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics and Divine Imagery* (Brill Reference Library of Ancient Judaism 4; Leiden: Brill).

Adam, K.-P. 2001. *Der königliche Held: Die Entsprechung von kämpfendem Gott und kämpfendem König in Psalm 18* (*Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum alten und neuen Testament* 91, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).

Aitken, J. K. 1998. 'דֶּרֶךְ' in T. Muraoka (ed.), *Semantics of Ancient Hebrew* (Abr-Nahrain Supplement Series 6, Peeters: Louvain).

Albright, W. F. 1950. 'The Psalm of Habakkuk' in H. H. Rowley (ed.), *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy. Presented to Theodore H. Robinson on his Sixty-fifth Birthday, August 9th, 1946* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark).

Allen, L. C. 1983. *Psalms 101–150* (Word Biblical Commentary 21; Waco, TX: Word Books).

———. 1986. 'David as Exemplar of Spirituality: The Redactional Function of Psalm 19' in *Biblica* 67.4, 544–46.

———. 1997. 'אפף' in W. A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* 1 (Carlisle: Paternoster), 482–3.

Aster, S. 2006. 'The Phenomenon of Divine and Human Radiance in the Hebrew Bible and in Northwest Semitic and Mesopotamian Literature: A Philological and Comparative Study' (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania).

Auffret, P. 1982. *La sagesse a bâti sa maison. Etudes de structures littéraires dans l'Ancien Testament et spécialement dans les Psaumes* (Orbis biblicus et orientalis 49), Fribourg: Editions universitaires.

Avishur, Y. 1984. *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literature* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 210, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).

Barr, J. 1968. *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Barrick, W. B. 1982. 'The Meaning and Usage of RKB in Biblical Hebrew' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101, 481–503.

———. 1985. 'Elisha and the Magic Bow: A Note on 2 Kings 13.15–17' in *Vetus Testamentum* 35, 355–363.

Bartelmus, R. 2004. 'רָחַב', *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 13, (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 427–37.

Basson, A. 2006. *Divine Metaphors in Selected Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. 15, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck).

Baudissin, W. 1896/7. 'The Original Meaning of "Belial" ', *Expository Times* 9, 40–45.

Baumann, E. 1945. *Strukturuntersuchungen im Psalter I*, in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 61.1, 114–176.

Begrich, J. 1964. 'Die Vertrauensäusserungen im israelitischen Klagelied des Einzelnen und in seinen babylonischen Gegenstück' in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Theologische Bücherei 21, Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag), 168–216.

Bellinger, W. 1995. *A Hermeneutic of Curiosity and Readings of Psalm 61* (Studies in Old Testament Interpretation 1, Macon: Mercer University).

Bergmann, C. D. 2008. *Childbirth as a Metaphor for Crisis: Evidence from the Ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, and 1QH XI, 1–18*, (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter).

Bergman, J., Krecher, J. and Hamp, V. 1974 (rev. ed. 1977). 'אִשׁ' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* I, (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 418–28.

Berlin, A. 1994. *Zephaniah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible, 1st ed., New York: Doubleday).

——. 1997. 'On Reading Biblical Poetry: The Role of Metaphor' in J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume Cambridge 1995* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 66, Leiden: Brill), 25–36.

Berry, D. K. 1993. *The Psalms and their Readers: Interpretive Strategies for Ps 18* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 153, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).

Bertram, G. 1939. 'Der Sprachsatz der Septuaginta und der des hebräischen Alten Testaments' in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 57.1–2, 85–101.

Beyerlin, W. (ed.) 1978. *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press).

Black, M. 1962. *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

——. 1979 (2nd ed. 1993, repr. 1995). 'More About Metaphor' in A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 19–41.

Bloch, Y. 2009. 'The Prefixed Perfective and the Dating of Early Hebrew Poetry—A Re-Evaluation' in *Vetus Testamentum* 59, 34–70.

Boeve, L. and Feyaerts, K. 1999. 'Religious Metaphors in a Postmodern Culture: Transverse Links between Apophatical Theology and Cognitive Semantics' in Boeve/Feyaerts (eds.), *Metaphor and God-talk* (Religions and Discourse vol. 2, Bern: Peter Lang), 153–186.

Breasted, J. H. (ed.) 1988. *Ancient Records of Egypt* (London: Histories and Mysteries of Man Ltd).

Brenneman, J. E. 1997. *Canons in Conflict: Negotiating Texts in True and False Prophecy* (Oxford: OUP).

Brettler, M. Z. 1989. *God is King. Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 76, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).

——. 1993. 'Images of YHWH the Warrior in the Psalms', *Women, War, and Metaphor: Language and Society in the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, *Semeia* 61, 135–165.

Briggs, C. A. and Briggs, E. G. 1906–1907. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark).

Brown, W. 2002. *Seeing the Psalms. A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press).

——. 2010. ' "Here Comes the Sun!": The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24' in E. Zenger (ed.), *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium 238, Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters), 259–277.

Brueggemann, W. 1988. '2 Samuel 21–24: An Appendix of Deconstruction?' in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50, 383–397.

——. 1997. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press).

Buttenwieser, M. 1938. *The Psalms, Chronologically Treated, with a New Translation* (Chicago: Chicago Press).

Caird, G. B. 1980. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co).

Carlson, R. A. 1964. *David the Chosen King* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell).

Cheyne, T. K. 1895. 'The Development of the Meanings of Belial', *The Expositor* 5th Series 1, 435–9.

——. 1896/97. *Expository Times* 8, 423–4.

Childs, B. S. 2001. *Isaiah* (Old Testament Library, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press).

Chisholm, R. B. 1983. "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22", unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary.

Clark, G. R. 1993. *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 157, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
Clifford, R. J. 1972. *The Cosmic Mountain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
Clines, D. J. A. 1989. *Job 1–20* (Word Biblical Commentary 17, Dallas, TX: Word Books).
Cohen, H. R. 1978. *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 37, Missoula: Scholars Press).
Cohen, M. (ed.) 2003. *Miqra'ot Gedolot, Psalms II: A Revised and Augmented Scientific Edition by Menachem Cohen* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press).
Cohen, M. 2008. *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: from Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (Leiden: Brill).
Cole, R. 2002. 'An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2' in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 26, 75–88.
Cornelius, I. 2004. *The Many Faces of the Goddess: The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet and Asherah c.1500–1000 B.C.* Orbis biblicus et orientalis 204, Fribourg: Academic Press.
Cotrozzi, S. 2010. *Expect the Unexpected: Aspects of Pragmatic Foregrounding in Old Testament Narratives* (*Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies*, 510: New York: T & T Clark).
Couroyer, B. 1965. 'L'arc d'airain' in *Revue biblique* 72, 508–514.
———. 1981. 'NHT: "Encorder un Arc"(?)', *Revue biblique* 88, 13–18.
Craigie, P. 2004. *Psalms 1–50* (Word Biblical Commentary 19, Dallas, TX: Word Books).
Creach, J. 1996. *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 217, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
Croft, J. L. 1987. *The Identity of the Individual in the Psalms* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 44, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
Cross, F. M. & Freedman, D. N. 1953. 'A Royal Song of Thanksgiving: II Samuel 22 = Psalm 18' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 72.1, 15–34.
Cross, F. M. 1962. 'Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs' in *Harvard Theological Review* 55, 225–229.
———. 1973. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Crouch, C. L. 2009. *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 407, Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
Crüsemann, F. 1969. *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments 32, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).
Curtis, A. 1978. 'The "Subjugation of the Waters" Motif in the Psalms: Imagery or Polemic?' in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23, 245–56.
———. 2004. *Psalms* (Peterborough: Epworth Press).
Dahood, M. 1966. *Psalms I 1–50* (The Anchor Bible 16, New York: Doubleday and Company).
Day, J. 1985. *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Davies, G. I. 1979. *The Way of the Wilderness: A Geographical Study of the Wilderness Itineraries in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
———. 1986. *Megiddo* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press).
Delitzsch, F. 1984. *Die Psalmen* (5th ed., Giessen: Brunnen Verlag).
Dewald, H. 2007. "Kognitive Struktur und Funktion von Gottesmetaphern im 18. Psalm" in *Biblische Notizen* 132, 23–54.
Dille, S. 2004. *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah* (London: T & T Clark.
Domeris, W. R. 1997. 'יקש' in W. A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* 2, (Carlisle: Paternoster), 525–527.

Dommershausen, W. 1995. 'כָּנָף' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 7 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 229–31.

Doyle, B. 2000. *The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking: A Study of the Use, Function and Significance of Metaphors in Isaiah 24–27* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 151, Leuven: Peeters).

Driver, G. R. 1931. 'Studies in the Vocabulary of the Old Testament' in *Journal of Theological Studies* 32, 250–257.

——. 1934. 'Hebrew Notes' in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 52, 51–56.

——. 1936. 'Textual and Linguistic Problems in the Book of Psalms' in *Harvard Theological Review* 29, 171–195.

——. 1960. 'Problems in the Hebrew Text of Job' in M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas (eds.), *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East: Presented to Professor Harold Henry Rowley by the Society for Old Testament Study in Association with the Editorial Board of Vetus Testamentum in Celebration of his Sixty-fifth birthday, 24 March 1955* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 3, Leiden: Brill), 72–93.

Duhm, B. 1899. *Die Psalmen* (Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament 14, Freiburg im Breisgau: Mohr).

Dürr, L. 1931. 'Der König als Meister in Bogenschiessen von Gottheit unterrichtet' in Orientalistische Literaturzeitung 34/8, col. 697.

Eaton, J. 1968. 'Some Questions of Philology and Exegesis in the Psalms' in *Journal of Theological Studies* 19, 603–04.

——. 1976. *Kingship and the Psalms* (Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series 32, London: SCM Press Ltd).

Ebeling, E. 1953. *Die akkadische Gebetsserie Handerhebung* (Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, *Institut für Orientforschung* 20, Berlin: Akademie Verlag).

Eidevall, G. 1996. *Grapes in the Desert: Metaphors, Models and Themes in Hosea 4–14* (Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 43, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International).

Eissfeldt, O. 1965. *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (tr. P. R. Ackroyd, New York: Harper & Row).

Emerton, J. A. 1987. 'Sheol and the Sons of Belial' in *Vetus Testamentum* 37, 214–18.

——. 2003. 'Treading the Bow' in *Vetus Testamentum* 53, 465–486.

Erman, A. (tr. A. M. Blackman) 1927. *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians: Poems, Narratives and Manuals of Instruction from the Third and Second Millennia B.C.* (London: Methuen).

Evans, J. 2010. "Short Note. I love you: Text-critical Note on Ps 18.2" in *Vetus Testamentum* 60.4, 659–661.

Fabry H.-J. 1980. 'חבל' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 4, (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 172–179.

Falkenstein, A. and von Soden, W. (eds. / trs.) 1953. *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Bibliothek der alten Welt, Zürich: Artemis Verlag).

Fauconnier, G. and Turner, M. 1996. 'Blending as a Central Process of Grammar' in Adele Goldberg (ed.), *Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language* (Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information Publications), 113–129.

Feigin, S. I. 1950. 'The Heavenly Sieve' in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 9, 40–3.

Fensham, F. C. 1959. 'Thunderstones in Ugaritic' in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 18, 273–4.

Fillmore, C. 1976. 'Frame Semantics and the Nature of Language' in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences: Conference on the Origin and Development of Language and Speech*, 280, 20–32.

Firmage, E., Milgrom, J., and Dahmen, U. 2004. 'רוּם' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 13 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 402–412.

Fleet, W. F. 1930–31. 'Psalm xviii.30', *Expository Times* 42, 526.
Fludernik, M. (ed.) 2011. *Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory: Perspectives on Literary Metaphor* (Routledge Studies in Rhetoric and Stylistics, New York: Routledge).
———. 1998. 'Conceptual Integration Networks' in *Cognitive Science* 22.2, 133–187.
Foreman, B. A. 2011. *Animal Metaphors and the People of Israel in the Book of Jeremiah* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 238, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).
Freedman D. N. and O'Connor M. P. 1997. 'מָגֵן' in Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament 8 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 74–87.
Freeman, M. H. 2000. "Poetry and the Scope of Metaphor: Toward a cognitive theory of literature" in A. Barcelona (ed.), *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter), 253–281.
Frymer-Kensky, T. 1980. 'Tit for Tat', *The Biblical Archaeologist* 43, 230–4.
Gandiya, V. C. 1997. *Storm Theophany in the Hebrew Psalms, Prophetic and Wisdom Literature and the Attribution of Socio-political Roles to Yahweh*, University of Cambridge: Ph.D. Dissertation.
Geller, S. A. 1979. *Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 20, Harvard: Scholars Press).
Gerleman, G. 1945–46. 'Contributions to the Old Testament Terminology of the Chase' in *Bulletin de la Société Royale des Lettres de Lund*, 79–90.
Gibbs, R. W. 2008. "Metaphor and Thought: The State of the Art" in R. Gibbs (ed.), *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 3–16.
Gibson, J. C. L. 1975. *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* 2: *Aramaic Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
Glucksberg, S. and Keysar, B. 1979 (2nd edition 1993). 'How Metaphors Work' in A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 401–424.
Glucksberg, S. 2008. "How Metaphors Create Categories—Quickly" in R. Gibbs (ed.), *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 67–83.
Godawa, B. 2009. *Word Pictures: Knowing God Through Story and Imagination* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press).
Goodman, A. E. 1968. 'חסד and תודה in the Linguistic Tradition of the Psalter' in P. R. Ackroyd and B. Lindars (eds.), *Words and Meanings, Essays presented to David Winton Thomas on his retirement from the Regius Professorship of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 105–115.
Gordon, C. H. 1955. *Ugaritic Manual* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum).
Gordon, R. P. 1986 (repr. 2004). *I & II Samuel* (Carlisle: Paternoster).
Grady, J., Oakley, T. and Coulson, S. 1999. 'Conceptual Blending and Metaphor', in R. Gibbs (ed.), *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics* (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins).
Grant, J. A. 2004. *The King as Exemplar: the Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta Academia Biblica 17, Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature).
Grayson, A. K. 1976. *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* 2 (Records of the Ancient Near East, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz).
———. 1996 (repr. 2002). *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millenium BC II (858–745 BC)* (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian periods*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press).
Green, A. R. W. 2003. *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Biblical and Judaic Studies 8, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns).
Greenberg, M. 1957. 'The Hebrew Oath Particle' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76, 34–39.
———. 1983. *Ezekiel 1–20* (The Anchor Bible 22, New York: Doubleday).

Groenewald, A. 2009. 'Ethics of the Psalms: Psalm 16 within the Context of Psalms 15–24' in *Journal for Semitics* 18, 421–433.
Groom, S. 2003. *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew* (Carlisle: Paternoster).
Guillaume, P. 2010. 'Bull-Leaping in Psalm 18' in P. Van Hecke and A. Labahn (eds.), *Metaphors in the Psalms* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 231, Leuven: Peeters), 35–46.
Gunkel, H. 1926 (5th ed. 1968). *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).
——. 1933 (2nd ed. 1966). *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels*, completed by J. Begrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).
Haag, H. 1980. 'חָמָס' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 4 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 478–487.
Harshav, B. 2007. 'Metaphor and Frames of Reference' in B. Harshav, *Explorations in Poetics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 32–75.
Hatch, E. and Redpath, H. A. 1897 (suppl. 1906; repr. 1983). *Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament* 2 vols. (Oxford, suppl. 1906; repr., 3 vols. in 2, Grand Rapids, 1983).
Hayes, E. R. 2008. *The Pragmatics of Perception and Cognition in MT Jeremiah 1:1–6:30: A Cognitive Linguistics Approach* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 380; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter).
Hertzberg, H. W. 1964. *1 & 2 Samuel* (Old Testament Library, tr. J. S. Bowden, Philadelphia: Westminster Press).
Hilber, J. H. 2009. 'Psalms' in J. H. Walton (ed.), *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* 5 (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan) 316–463.
Hillers, D. 1964. 'Amos 7,4 and Ancient Parallels' in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26, 221–5.
Hirsch-Luipold, R. 2002. *Plutarchs Denken in Bildern: Studien zur literarischen, philosophischen und religiösen Funktion des Bildhaften* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck).
Hoffner, H. A. 1986 (repr. 1988). 'חֵיץ' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 5 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 118–24.
Hossfeld, F.-L. 1986. 'Der Wandel des Beters in Ps 18. Wachstumsphasen eines Dankliedes' in E. Haag and F.-L. Hossfeld (eds.), *Freude an der Weisung des Herrn, Festschrift für H. Gross* (Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge 13; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk), 171–190.
Hossfeld F.-L. and Kalthoff, B. 1998. 'נָצַל' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 9 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 533–540.
Hossfeld, F.-L., van der Velden, F., and Dahmen, U. 2006. 'שָׁלַח' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 15 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 49–71.
Hossfeld, F.-L. & Zenger, E. 1993. *Die Psalmen I-50* (Neuer Echter Bibel 29; Würzburg: Echter Verlag).
——. 1993. ' "Wer darf hinaufziehn zum Berg JHWH's?" Zur Redaktionsgeschichte und Theologie der Psalmengruppe 15–24' in G. Braulik, W. Gross, S. Mc Evenue (eds.), *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel. Für N. Lohfink SJ* (Freiburg: Herder), 166–182.
——. 2000. *Psalmen 51–100* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament; Freidburg: Herder).
——. 2005 *Psalms 2* (Hermeneia Series, Minneapolis: Fortress).
Houtman, C. 1993. *Der Himmel im Alten Testament* (Leiden: Brill).
Howard, D. M. 2005. 'The Psalms and Current Study' in D. Firth and P. S. Johnston (eds.), *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press), 23–40.
Huffmon, H. B. 1966. 'The Treaty Background of Hebrew YĀDA" in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 181, 31–37.

Hugger, P. 1971. *Jahwe meine Zuflucht. Gestalt und Theologie des 91. Psalms* (Münsterschwarzach: Vier-Türme-Verlag).
Hunter, A. G. 2008. *An Introduction to the Psalms* (London: T. & T. Clark).
Hunter, J. H. 1987. *Theophany in the Psalms: A Study of Selected Theophany passages*, PhD diss., Stellenbosch University.
——. 1989. 'The Literary Composition of Theophany Passages in the Hebrew Psalms' in *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 15, 97–107.
Hurvitz, A. 2003. 'Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period: The Problem of 'Aramaisms' in Linguistic Research on the Hebrew Bible' in I. Young (ed.), *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (London: T&T Clark), 24–37.
Jackson, G. 2007. *The Lincoln Psalter* (Manchester: Carcanet).
Janowski, B. 2009. 'Der Gott Israels und die Toten: Eine religions- und theologiegeschichtliche Skizze' in F. Hartenstein and M. Rösel (eds.), *JHWH und die Götter der Völker.* Symposium zum 80. Geburtstag von Klaus Koch (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag), 99–138.
Jastrow, M. 1898. *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Handbooks on the History of Religions, Boston: Ginn and Company).
——. 1905. *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens* 2.i (Berlin: Töpelman).
Jeremias, J. 1965. *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 10, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag).
Johnson, A. 1967 (2nd ed). *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press).
Joüon, P. and Muraoka, T. 1993. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* 1 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico).
Kang, S.-M. 1989. *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 177, Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
Kapelrud, A. S. 1963. 'Nochmals Jahwäh malak' in *Vetus Testamentum* 13, 221–31.
Kearney, R. 1998. *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-modern* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).
Kedar-Kopfstein, B. 2004. 'קֶרֶן' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 13 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 167–174.
Keel, O. 1978 (repr. 1997). *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (tr. T. J. Hallet, New York: Seabury; repr. 1997, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns).
——. 1990. 'Der Bogen als Herrschaftssymbol' in O. Keel, M. Schuval and C. Uehlinger, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel, Band III: Die Frühe Eizenzeit* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 100, Fribourg: Universitätsverlag), 27–66.
Keel, O. and Uehlinger C. 1992. *Göttinen, Götter und Gottessymbole* (Quaestiones disputatae 134, Fribourg: Herder).
Kellerman, D. 1999. 'נֵר' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 10 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 14–24.
Kendrick, M. 1994. 'Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome: CNN's and CBS's Video Narratives of the Persian Gulf War' in S. Jeffords, L. Rabinovitz (eds.), *Seeing Through the Media: The Persian Gulf War* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 59–76.
King, P. D. 2012. *Surrounded by Bitterness: Image Schemas and Metaphor for Conceptualizing Distress in Classical Hebrew* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications).
Kitchen, K. A. 1996. *Ramesside Inscriptions Translated and Annotated*, 2 (Oxford: Blackwell).
Kittay, E. 1987. *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
Klein, E. 1987. *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (Jerusalem: Carta).

Klingbeil, M. 1999. *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 169, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

——. 2010. 'Metaphors That Travel and (Almost) Vanish: Mapping Diachronic Changes in the Intertextual Usage of the Heavenly Warrior Metaphor in Psalms 18 and 144' in P. Van Hecke and A. Labahn (eds.), *Metaphors in the Psalms* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 231, Leuven: Peeters), 115–134.

Kittay, E. F. and Lehrer, A. 1981. 'Semantic Fields and the Structure of Metaphor' in *Studies in Language* 5.1, 31–63.

Knowles, M. P. 1989. ' "The Rock, His Work Is Perfect": Unusual Imagery for God in Deuteronomy XXXII' in *Vetus Testamentum* 39, 307–322.

Koch, K. 1955. 'Gibt es ein Vergeltungsdogma im Alten Testament?' in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 52, 1–42.

——. 1976a. 'צֶדֶק' in *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* 2 (eds. E. Jenni and C. Westermann, Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag), 507–530.

——. 1976b. 'תָּמַם' in *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* 2 (eds. E. Jenni and C. Westermann, Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag), 1046–1051.

Köckert, M. 2001. 'Die Theophanie des Wettergottes Jahwe in Psalm 18' in Th. Richter, D. Prechel, J. Klinger (eds.) *Kulturgeschichten: altorientalische Studien für Volkert Hass zum 65. Geburtstag* (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücken Verlag), 209–226.

Kosmala, H. 1964. 'גָּבַר' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 2 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 377–82.

Kotzé, Z. 2004. "A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to the Emotion of Anger in the Old Testament," *Hervormde teologiese studies* 60, 843–863.

——. 2005. "Metaphors and Metonymies for Anger in the Old Testament: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach," *Scriptura* 88, 18–25.

Kövecses, Z. 2006. *Language, Mind and Culture: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford: OUP).

Kraus, H.-J. 1993. *Psalms 1–59*, tr. H. Oswald, Minneapolis, Fortress Press.

Kuntz, J. K. 1983. 'Ps 18: A Rhetorical-Critical Analysis', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 26, 3–31.

Kwakkel, G. 2002. *According to my righteousness: Upright behaviour as Grounds for deliverance in Psalms 7, 17, 18, 26 and 44* (Oudtestamentische Studiën 46; Leiden: Brill).

Labuschagne, C. J. 1966. *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament*, (Pretoria Oriental Series 5, Leiden: Brill).

LaCocque, A. and Ricoeur, P. 1998. *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies* (tr. D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Lakoff, G. 1987. 'The Death of Dead Metaphor' in *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, 2.2, 143–147.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Lakoff, G. & Turner, M. 1989. *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Lambert, W. G. 1960. *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Lambert, W. G., and Millard, A. R. 1969. *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Clarendon Press: Oxford).

Leezenberg, M. 2001. *Contexts of Metaphor* (Current Research in the Semantics / Pragmatics Interface 7, London: Elsevier).

Levi, I. (ed.) 1904. *The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus* (Leiden: Brill).

Levin, S. R. 1979 (2nd ed. 1993). 'Language, Concepts and Worlds' in A. Ortony (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 112–123.

Levinson, S. C. 1983. *Pragmatics* (Cambridge textbooks in linguistics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Lichtheim, M. 1976 (repr. 2006). *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom.* With a New Forward by Hans-W. Fischer-Elfert (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).
Lipinski, E. 1963. 'YHWH malak', in *Biblica* 44, 405–460.
Loewenstamm, S. E. 1980. 'The Trembling of Nature during the Theophany' in *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 204, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Kevelaer) 173–189.
Longacre, R. E. 2006. "Discourse Structure, Verb Forms and Archaism in Ps 18" in *Journal of Translation* 2.1, 17–30.
Low, K. 2011. 'Implications Surrounding Girding the Loins in Light of Gender, Body, and Power' in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36.1, 3–30.
Luckenbill, D. D. 1924. *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Oriental Institute publication 2, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press).
——. 1926. *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* 1 and 2 (University of Chicago Press: Chicago).
Lyons, J. 1995. *Linguistic Semantics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Macintosh, A. A. 1969. 'A Consideration of גער' in *Vetus Testamentum* 19, 471–9.
——. 2011. 'Light on ליץ' in J. Aitken, K. Dell, B. Mastin (eds.), *On Stone and Scroll* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 420), 479–492.
Macky, P. 1990. *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought: A Method for Interpreting the Bible* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 19, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press).
Maiberger, P. 2004. 'רוּץ' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 13 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 416–22.
Mann, T. W. 1977. *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: the Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press).
Maré, L. P. 2010. "The Theophany Report in Ps 18 as an Expression of an Alternative Reality" in *Journal for Semitics* 19.1, 98–112.
May, H. G. 1955. 'Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, 'Many Waters'' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74, 9–21.
Mayer, G. 1990. 'יָרַד' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 6 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 315–22.
Mays, J. L. 1987. 'The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, 3–12.
——. 1994. *Psalms* (Interpretation Series, Louisville: Westminster John Knox).
McCann, J. Clinton, (ed.) 1993. *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 159, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
McCarter, P. K. 1984. *II Samuel* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday).
Miller, G. A. 1979 (2nd ed. 1993). 'Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors' in A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 357–400.
Miller, P. D. 1965. 'Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel' in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 27, 256–61.
——. 1973. *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
——. 1994. 'Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24' in K. Seybold and E. Zenger (eds.), *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung* (Herders Biblische Studien 1, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder), 127–142.
Moran, W. L. 1962. 'Some Remarks on the Song of Moses' in *Biblica* 43, 1962, 317–327.
Moughtin-Mumby, S. 2008. *Sexual and Marital Metaphors in Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel* (Oxford Theological Monographs, Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Mowinckel, S. 1962a (rev. ed. 2004). *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (tr. D. R. Ap-Thomas Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans).

——. 1962b. 'Drive and/or Ride', in *Vetus Testamentum* 12, 278–299).
Murphy, R. 1993. 'Reflections on Contextual Interpretation of the Psalms' in Clinton McCann, J., (ed.) *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 159, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), 21–28.
Naudé, J. 1997. 'גַּחֶלֶת' in W. A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* 1 (Carlisle: Paternoster), 851–2.
Newsom, C. 1996. 'Job' in *New Interpreters Bible* 4 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press).
Niehaus, J. 1995. *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Carlisle: Paternoster).
Nielsen, K. 1989. *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 65, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
——. 2002. 'The Variety of Metaphors about God in the Psalter: Deconstruction and Reconstruction' in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 16, 151–159.
——. 2010. 'Metaphorical Language and Theophany in Psalm 18' in P. van Hecke and A. Labahn (eds.), *Metaphors in the Psalms* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 231, Leuven: Peeters), 197–208.
Nissinen, M. 2003. *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (Writings from the Ancient World 12; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature).
Noth, M. 1928 (rep. 1980). *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament 46, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer).
Ortlund, E. N. 2010. *Theophany and Chaoskampf: The Interpretation of Theophanic Imagery in the Baal Epic, Isaiah, and the Twelve* (*Gorgias Ugaritic Studies* 5; Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press).
Ortony, A. 1979 (2nd ed. 1993). 'The Role of Similarity in Similes and Metaphors' in A. Ortony (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 342–356.
Ottosson, M. 1974 (rev. ed. 1977). 'אָכַל' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 1 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 236–241.
Pardee, D. 1976. 'The Preposition in Ugaritic' in *Ugarit-Forschungen* 8, 215–322.
Paschen, W. 1970. *Rein und Unrein, Untersuchung zur biblischen Wortgeschichte* (Studien zum alten und neuen Testament 24, München: Kösel Verlag).
Peels, H. G. M. 1995. *The Vengeance of God: The Meaning of the Root NQM and the Function of the NQM-Texts in the Context of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament* (Old Testament Studies 31, Leiden: Brill).
Petruck, M. R. L. 1996. "Frame semantics" in J. Verschueren, J.-O. Östman, J. Blommaert, and C. Bulcaen (eds.), *Handbook of Pragmatics* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins), 1–13.
Pinker, A. 2007. 'On the Meaning of קשת־נחושה' in E. Ben Zvi (ed.), *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures II*, 5 (New Jersey: Gorgias Press LLC), 233–242.
Poorthuis, M. (ed.) 1997. *Mijn God, Mijn God, Waarom Hebt Gij Mij Verlaten? Een interdisciplinaire bundel over Ps 22* (Baarn: Ten Have).
Preuss, H. D. 1980. 'זָרַע' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 4 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 143–162.
Reider, J. 1952. 'Etymological Studies in Biblical Hebrew' in *Vetus Testamentum* 2, 113–130.
Reif, S. C. 1971. 'A Note on גער' in *Vetus Testamentum* 21, 241–44.
Reiner, E., Brinkman, J. (eds.) 1956. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: Oriental Institute).
Richards, I. A. 1936. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London: Oxford University Press).
Ricoeur, P. 1975a (tr. 2003). *La métaphore vive* (Éditions du Seuil, Paris; *The Rule of Metaphor*, tr. R. Czerny with K. McLaughlin & J. Costello SJ, London: Routledge).
——. 1975b 'Biblical Hermeneutics' in J. D. Crossan (ed.) *Paul Ricoeur on Biblical Hermeneutics* (*Semeia* 4, Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature).

Ridderbos, J. 1954. 'Jahwäh malak' in *Vetus Testamentum* 4, 87–9.
Ridderbos, N. H. 1972. *Die Psalmen: Stilistische Verfahren und Aufbau mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Ps 1–41* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 117, Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
Ringgren, H. 1963. 'Einige Schilderungen des göttlichen Zorns' in E. Würthwein & O. Kaiser (eds.), *Tradition und Situation: Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie*, FS A. Weiser zum 70. Geburtstag, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) 107–113.
——. 1980. 'חָיָה' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 4 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 324–344.
——. 2001a. 'עָמַד' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 11 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 178–181.
——. 2001b. 'פּוּץ' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 11 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 509–12.
Robar, E. J. 2013. "The Verb and the Paragraph in Biblical Hebrew: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach", unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge.
Rüterswörden U. 2006. 'שָׁמַע' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 15 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 253–279.
Russell, D. A. and Winterbottom, M. (eds.) 1972. *Ancient Literary Criticism: The Principal Texts in New Translations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Sæbø, M. 1970. 'Die Hebräischen Nomina *'ed* und *'ēd*—zwei sumerisch-akkadische Fremdwörter?' in *Studia theologica* 24, 130–141.
——. 1971. 'אִיד' in *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* 1 (eds. E. Jenni and C. Westermann, Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag), 122–126.
——. 2004. 'שָׁוָה' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 14 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 522–527.
Sanders, P. 2000. 'Ancient Colon Delimitations: 2 Samuel and Psalm 18' in M. Korpel and J. Oesch (eds.), *Delimitation Criticism: A New Tool in Biblical Scholarship* (Pericope 1 Scripture as Written and Read in Antiquity, Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum), 277–311.
Sarna, N. 1959. 'The Interchange of the Prepositions Beth and Min in Biblical Hebrew' in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 78, 310–11.
Sass, B., and Uehlinger, C. (eds.) 1993. *Studies in the Iconography of Inscribed Northwest Semitic Seals* (Orbis biblicus et orientalis 125, Fribourg: University Press).
Sawyer, J. F. A. 1972. *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (Studies in Biblical Theology 2nd series 24, London: SCM Press).
Sawyer, J. F. A. and Fabry, H.-J. 1990. 'יָשַׁע' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 6 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 441–463.
Schäfer, H. 1929. 'König Amenophis als Meisterschütz' in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 32/4, col. 233–244.
——. 1931. 'Weiteres zum Bogenschiessen im alten Ägypten', *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 34/2, col. 89–96.
Scharbert, J. 1975 (repr. 1977). 'בָּרַךְ' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 2 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 279–308.
Schmuttermayr, G. 1971. *Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22: Studien zu einem Doppeltext, Probleme der Textkritik und Übersetzung und das Psalterium Pianum* (Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 25, München: Kosel Verlag).
Schnider, S. 2006. 'Psalm XVIII: Theophany, Epiphany, Empowerment' in *Vetus Testamentum* 56, 386–98.

Schökel, L. A. 1988. *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (tr. A. Graffy, Subsidia biblica 11, Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico).
Schröten, J. 1995. *Entstehung, Komposition und Wirkungsgeschichte des 118. Psalms* (Bulletin de bibliographie biblique 95, Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum).
Scriba, A. 1995. *Die Geschichte des Motivkomplexes Theophanie: seine Elemente, Einbindung in Geschehensabläufe und Verwendungsweisen in altisraelitischer, frühjüdischer und frühchristlicher Literatur* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 167, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht).
Searle, J. 1979 (2nd ed. 1993). 'Metaphor' in A. Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 83–111.
Seebass, H. 1996. 'לָקַח' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 8 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 16–21.
Seybold, K. 1973. 'Das Herrscherbild des Bileamorakels Num 24,15–19' in *Theologische Zeitschrift* 29, 1–19.
———. 1978. 'גָּמַל' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 3 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 23–33.
———. 1996. *Die Psalmen* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament 1/15, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck).
———. 1998. 'מָשַׁח' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 9 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 43–54.
Shead, S. 2011. *Radical Frame Semantics and Biblical Hebrew: Exploring Lexical Semantics* (Biblical Interpretation Series, 108), Leiden: Brill.
Sheppard, G. T. 1980. *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 151, Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
Slomovic, E. 1979. 'Toward an Understanding of the Formation of Historical Psalm Titles in the Book of Psalms' in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 91, 350–80.
Smelik, M. and Smelik, W. 2001. 'Twin Targums: Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22' in A. Rapoport-Albert and G. Greenberg (eds.), *Biblical Hebrews, Biblical Texts: Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 333), 244–281.
Soskice, J. 1985. *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
———. 2008. *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender, and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Spoer, H. H. 1907. 'Versuch einer Erklärung von Psalm 18' in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 27, 145–161.
Stec, D. 2004. *The Targum of Psalms: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible—The Targums, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press).
Steinhart, E. and Kittay, E. 1994. 'Generating Metaphors from Networks: A Formal Interpretation of the Semantic Field Theory of Metaphor' in J. Hintikka (ed.), *Aspects of Metaphor* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers), 41–94.
Stendebach, F. J. 2001. 'עַיִן' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 11 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 28–44.
———. 2001. 'עָנָה' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 11 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 215–230.
———. 2004. 'רֶגֶל' in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 13 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 309–324.
Stern, J. 2000. *Metaphor in Context* (Massachusetts: MIT Press).
Stovell, B. 2012. *Mapping Metaphorical Discourse in the Fourth Gospel: John's Eternal King* (Linguistic Biblical Studies, Boston/Leiden: Brill).

Streck, M. 1916. *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Nineveh's* II (Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 7, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs).
Stuart, D. K. 1976. *Studies in Early Hebrew Meter* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 13, Missoula: Scholars Press).
Tallqvist, K. 1938. *Akkadische Götterepitheta: mit einem Götterverzeichnis und einer Liste der prädikativen Elemente der sumerischen Götternamen* (Studia Orientalia 7, Helsingfors: Societas Orientalis Fennica).
——. 1914. (repr. 1966). *Assyrian Personal Names* (Helsingfors: Acta Societatis Scientarum Fennicae, repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung).
Tate, M. E. 1990. *Psalms 51–100* (Word Biblical Commentary 20, Dallas, TX: Word Books).
Tendahl, M. 2009. *A Hybrid Theory of Metaphor: Relevance Theory and Cognitive Linguistics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
Tsumura, D. 2005. *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns).
Van der Merwe, C. H. J. 2006. "Biblical Exegesis, Cognitive Linguistics and Hypertext," in A. Lemaire (ed.), *Congress Volume Leiden 2004* (Vetus Testamentum Supplement, 109; Leiden/Boston: Brill), 255–280.
——. 2007. "A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on Hinneh in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," *Hebrew Studies* 48, 101–140.
Van Hecke, P. (ed.) 2005. 'Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor. Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hos 4.16' in van Hecke (ed.), *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 187, Leuven: Leuven University Press), 215–231.
Van Steenbergen, G. 2002. 'Componential Analysis of Meaning and Cognitive Linguistics: Some Prospects for Biblical Hebrew Lexicology' in *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 28/1, 19–37.
Van Wolde, E. J. 2003a. *Job 28: Cognition in Context* (Leiden/Boston: Brill).
——. 2003b. 'In Words and Pictures: the Sun in 2 Sam 12.7–12' in *Biblical Interpretation* 11, 259–278.
——. 2009. *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, Ill.: Eisenbrauns).
Vesco, J. L. 1987. 'Le Psaume 18: relecture Davidique' in *Revue biblique* 94, 5–62.
Von Rad, G. 1950. '"Gerechtigkeit" und "Leben" in der Kultsprache der Psalmen' in W. Baumgartner (ed.), *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 418–437.
——. 1962. *Old Testament Theology* I (tr. D. M. G. Stalker, London: Oliver and Boyd).
Vriezen, Th. C. 1958. *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell).
Wagner, M. 1966. 'Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramaismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch' (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 96, Berlin: Töpelmann).
Waltke, B. K. and O'Connor, M. 1990. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns).
Ward, J. M. 1961. "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm 89", *Vetus Testamentum* 11, 321–339.
Watson, R. S. 2005. *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 341, Berlin: W. de Gruyter).
Watson, W. G. E. 1984 (repr. 2005). *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield, repr. T. & T. Clark: London).
Watts, J. W. 1992. *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 139, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
Weidner, E. 1959. *Die Inschriften Tukulti-Ninurtas I und seiner Nachfolger* (Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 12, Graz: Weidner).

Weinfeld, M. 1973. ‘ “Rider of the Clouds” and “Gatherer of the clouds” ’ in *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 5, 421–6.

Weiser, A. 1959 (tr. 1962). *The Psalms* (*Old Testament Library*, tr. H. Hartwell, London: SCM Press, from *Die Psalmen*, Das Alte Testament Deutsch 14/15, 5th revd. ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

——. 1961. ‘Zur Frage nach den Beziehungen der Psalmen zum Kult: Die Darstellung der Theophanie in den Psalmen und im Festkult’ in A. Weiser, *Glaube und Geschichte im Alten Testament und andere Ausgewählten Schrifte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht), 303–321.

Weiss, A. L. 2006. *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 107; Leiden: Brill).

Westermann, C. 1961 (tr. 1966). *The Praise of God in the Psalms* (tr. K. R. Crim, London: Epworth Press, from *Das Loben Gottes in den Psalmen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht).

——. 1984 (tr. 1989). *The Living Psalms* (tr. J. R. Porter, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd, from *Ausgewählte Psalmen übersetzt und erklärt*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht).

Whedbee, J. W. 1988. ‘On Divine and Human Bonds: The Tragedy of the House of David’ in G. M. Tucker, D. L. Petersen and R. R. Wilson (eds.), *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation*, Festschrift B. S. Childs (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), 147–165.

White, R. 1996. *The Structure of Metaphor* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers).

Widengren, G. 1936. *The Akkadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents: A Comparative Study* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells).

——. 1955. *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer).

Wiig, A. 1999. *Promise, Protection and Prosperity: Aspects of the ‘Shield’ as a Religious Relational Metaphor in an Ancient Near Eastern Perspective*, Lund Studies in History of Religions (Lund: Lund University).

Williams, P. J. 2002. ‘The Difference between the Roots *mlṭ* and *plṭ*’ in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 114, 438–442.

Williams, R. J. 1969. ‘Some Egyptianisms in the Old Testament’ in *Studies in Honour of John A. Wilson* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation 35, Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 93–98.

Williamson, H. G. M. 2006. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1–27*: *Vol I*, Commentary on *Isaiah 1–5*, International Critical Commentary (London: T. & T. Clark).

Winton Thomas, D. 1963. ‘בליעל in the Old Testament’ in J. N. Birdsall and R. W. Thomson (eds.), *Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of R.P. Casey* (Freiburg: Herder), 11–19.

Wood, A. 2008. *Of Wings and Wheels: A Synthetic Study of Cherubim in the Hebrew Bible* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 385, Berlin: W. de Gruyter).

Yadin, Y. 1963. *The Art of Biblical Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Discovery* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson).

——. 1968. “נָשַׁק”, in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* 5 (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute).

Zanella, F. 2010. *The Lexical Field of the Substantives of “Gift” in Ancient Hebrew* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 54, Leiden: Brill).

Zehnder, P. 1999. *Wegmetaphorik im Alten Testament: Eine semantische Untersuchung der alttestamentlichen und altorientalischen Weg-Lexeme mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer metaphorischen Verwendung* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 268, Berlin: W. de Gruyter).

Zimmerli, W. 1978. *Grundriss der alttestamentlichen Theologie* (Theologische Wissenschaft 3.1, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer).

Zobel, H.-J. 1986 (repr. 1988). ‘חֶסֶד’ *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 5 (eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trs. J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 44–64.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

ambiguity 1, 4, 36, 54, 118, 141, 151, 161, 195, 210
analogy 6, 10, 11, 13, 20, 33, 58, 64, 91, 178, 207, 208
assonance 16, 56, 81, 165, 171

Canonical criticism 51, 211
Chaoskampf 48, 80, 99, 100, 101, 107, 186, 194–199, 200, 201, 206
Cognitive Linguistics 10, 24, 27, 28, 29, 32, 67, 207, 212
Comparison Theory 11, 12, 20
Componential Analysis 28, 31
concentric pattern 50, 118, 120, 121, 155, 201
conceptual associations 6, 19, 65, 161, 167, 178, 202, 203, 207, 209
Conceptual Blending Theory 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 118
Conceptual Metaphor Theory 22–24, 31
conceptual models 33, 44, 77, 83, 102, 104, 107, 116, 118, 177, 187, 189, 195, 199, 200, 207, 209, 209, 212 (see also 'root metaphor')
  agricultural 166–167, 208
  'anger and judgement as fieriness' 85, 104, 209
  'battle as a hunt' 70, 72, 73, 77, 208
  'battle as a storm' 48, 71, 77, 83–105, 196, 209
  botanical 173–174
  deer 60, 133, 144–146, 153, 154
  'deliverance as righteousness' 180, 200
  'earthly battle as cosmic battle' 104, 159, 195, 197, 202,
  'enemies as chaotic forces' 77, 194–199, 209–210
  humiliation 65, 101, 110, 166, 173
  'military attack as predatory flight' 90–91, 104, 208
  'military attack as sexual attack' 101–102
  'military victory as divine judgement' 180, 200
  'right behaviour as walking along a particular path' 190, 194
  spatial 23, 75, 97, 113, 157, 161, 173, 178, 183, 192, 193, 201, 208, 209
  'YHWH as a devouring storm-god warrior' 104, 130, 145, 159, 181, 185, 190, 196, 197, 200, 201, 209
  'YHWH as judge' 86, 121, 130, 180–181, 199–201
  'YHWH's commandments as paths' 118–119, 120–122, 125, 155, 190, 194, 203, 205
  'YHWH-war as law-suit' 180, 185, 199–201
conceptual parallels 6, 44, 49, 69, 71, 81, 84, 85, 93, 99n.111, 102, 117, 121, 125, 133, 134, 149, 174

dead metaphor 23, 65

fields of reference 35, 37, 44, 50, 51, 53, 210, 211, 212
Form-criticism 40, 41, 42, 45, 46, 211
frames 25, 30, 33, 36, 50, 53, 60, 62, 68, 105, 112, 150, 154, 178, 194, 204, 205, 211
  conceptual frames 29, 180, 185, 199, 200
  frames of reference 26–28, 35, 37, 56, 58, 60, 118, 189, 207
  literary frames 7, 38, 54, 56, 155n.84, 210
Frame Semantics 25, 29

gap-filling 26–28, 32, 36, 54, 113, 118, 210, 212

hyperbole 3, 16, 87, 158, 165

iconic metaphors 2, 14, 17, 161, 190, 193
  lamp 13, 18, 131, 191, 208
  rock 13, 61, 62, 63, 67, 68, 139, 140, 175, 177, 179, 190, 193, 205
  shield 17, 21, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 74, 92, 137, 139, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154, 155, 179, 189, 190, 193
iconography 2, 4, 6, 31, 32, 64, 70, 85, 159, 161, 208
image-fields 3, 6, 31, 33, 60, 121, 126, 131, 168, 207, 208, 212

incomparability 42, 45, 49, 54, 62, 85, 130, 134, 137, 140, 159
Interaction Theories 15, 20–22

kingship 14, 48, 50, 51, 142, 159, 176, 177, 195, 209

lexical fields 21, 31, 33, 208
lexical semantics 28, 31, 207

metaphorical interplay 3, 5, 6, 10, 24, 26, 27, 31, 32, 51, 77, 139, 189–201, 202, 209, 210
metaphorical transference 27, 68, 76, 80, 83, 106, 112, 113, 192, 196, 200, 206
metonymy 79, 80, 121, 153, 154, 185, 186, 187
motifs:
  YHWH's anger 40, 47, 79, 81, 82, 84, 85, 94, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 180, 181, 199, 202
  righteousness and justice 42, 59, 110, 115–135, 180, 181, 185, 189, 190, 191, 194, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 206
  refuge 2, 17, 20, 32, 51, 59, 60, 61, 63, 66, 67, 68, 92, 110, 124, 131n.56, 137, 139, 140, 141, 150, 152, 178, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 205, 206
  strength 18, 21, 41, 45, 58–61, 65, 66–68, 77, 97, 104, 108–110, 113, 115, 122, 123, 129, 130–135, 140, 141–155, 158, 162, 166, 175, 178, 179, 186, 189–191, 193, 200, 201, 204, 205, 209
myth/mythology 5,43, 48, 49, 79, 80, 82–83, 89, 96, 104, 105, 107, 112, 194–197, 202

parallelism 97, 101, 131n.58, 132, 140, 148n.57, 157n.1, 167, 169, 173, 177, 208
personification 70, 72, 77, 83, 89, 91, 208
pragmatics 10, 15, 16, 22, 28, 29, 32, 212
Psalm 18
  authorship and date 4, 6, 35, 38–39, 40, 202–204
purpose 5, 42, 44–49, 50, 104, 204–206
  Sitze im Buch 6, 35, 39, 50–54
  Sitz im Leben 3, 6, 35, 44–49, 204–205, 211
  unity, form and composition 4, 6, 35, 40–44, 189, 202–204, 210

Reader-response approach 211
root metaphor (see also 'conceptual models') 14, 51, 67, 83, 180, 185
root play 68, 89, 127, 164, 171

salvation oracles 112, 132, 138, 211
semantic fields 21, 22, 24, 30, 31, 59, 60, 62, 126, 181, 190, 207
simile 6, 11–13, 16, 27, 66, 144, 145, 166, 167, 168, 173
source domain 2, 23, 24, 25, 27, 30, 33, 58, 59, 69, 208, 209
Substitution Theory 14n.27, 17–18, 70, 80, 89
symbol 17, 18, 47, 49, 64, 65, 68, 69, 71, 84, 85, 91, 106, 107, 110, 116, 125, 131, 137, 142, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 155n.84, 157, 160, 161, 166, 178, 186, 193, 197, 198, 208
synecdoche 6, 10–11, 172

target domain 2, 24, 25, 27, 30, 33, 60, 208
theophany 3, 5, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46–48, 77, 79–105, 112, 132, 157, 165, 174, 190, 192, 197, 199, 201, 202, 209

word-pictures 29, 31, 32, 53, 55, 61, 62, 67, 70, 80, 89, 104, 107, 125, 126, 131, 137, 143, 148, 150, 151, 154, 166, 167, 190, 195, 200, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212
word-play 3, 16, 56, 120, 123, 124, 126, 127, 137, 161, 166, 169

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Aalen, S. 131n.54
Aaron, D. 14n.28, 15n.33, 16n.38, 22n.61
Adam, K.-P. 4n.19, 42, 120, 132, 134n.71, 169n.36
Aitken, J. 117n.10
Allen, L. 69n.48, 205n.25
Aster, S. 142
Avishur, Y. 157n.1

Barrick, W. 89, 147n.51
Basson, A. 2, 3
Baudissin, W. 71n.59, 72n.62
Baumann, E. 43
Bergman, J. 85n.34
Bergmann, C. 24n.74
Berlin, A. 1, 168n.31
Berry, D. K. 4n.22, 39n.13, 40, 43n.28, 107n.137, 110n.148, 123n.22
Black, M. 11n.11, 13, 14n.23, n.24, 15, 16, 20, 21
Bloch, D. 39n.12
Boeve, L. 22n.62
Breasted, J. H. 162
Brettler, M. 4n.22, 14, 18, 67, 131n.53, 209
Briggs, C. A. and Briggs, E. G. 172n.45
Brown, W. 1, 2, 24n.74, 50n.59, 51, 206, 207
Brueggemann, W. 52n.67
Buttenwieser, M. 39n.15

Carlson, R. 52n.67
Cheyne, T. 71n.59
Childs, B. 38n.7, 110n.147
Chisholm, R. B. 4, 39n.11, 40n.20, 45n.35, 49n.58, 55n.1, 57n.11, 84n.30, 94n.91, 127n.30, 133n.65, 134n.70, 138n.4, 140n.14, 143n.26, 144n.35, 145n.38, n.41, 152, 153, 154n.82, 163n.17, 167n.29, 169n.38, 170n.40, 171n.42
Clark, G. R. 186n.85
Clines, D. J. A. 147n.52
Cohen, M. 18, 20n.51, 148n.59
Cornelius, I. 89n.62
Coulson, S. 25n.76, n.78
Couroyer, B. 147n.51, 148n.56
Craigie, P. 38n.6, 45, 55, 67n.41, 71n.59, 100n.117, 103n.127, 139, 143n.26, 147n.49, 152n.72, 164n.18, 167n.29, 169n.38, 195n.2
Creach, J. 51, 63n.28, 65, 205n.25, 209
Croft, W. 28, 129n.46
Cross, F. M. 3n.17, 38n.6, 39n.14, 55n.1, 86n.39, n.40, 87n.44, 93, 100n.117, 105n.132, 106, 123, 141n.20, 146n.42, 147n.48, 153n.78, 159n.4, 168n.34, 169n.36, 176n.54, 183n.78
Crouch, C. 127, 196, 200, 201
Crüsemann, F. 144n.32
Curtis, A. 69n.47, 195

Dahood, M. 57n.11, 87n.44, 145n.39, 148n.55, 152n.71, 164n.18, 176, 181n.73, 184n.82
Dahmen, U. 98n.108, 178n.66
Davies, G. I. 111
Day, J. 197
Delitzsch, F. 40n.21, 133n.65, 172n.45
De Vaux, R. 148n.53
Dewald, H. 32n.104
Dille, S. 24n.74
Domeris, W. 74n.74
Doyle, B. 19n.47
Driver, G. 72n.59, 147n.52, 168n.30, 181n.73
Duhm, B. 39n.15, 43n.27
Dürr, L. 149n.63

Eaton, J. H. 3n.18, 48, 173
Eissfeldt, O. 44n.33
Emerton, J. 72, 147
Evans, J. 58n.15, n.17

Fabry, H.-J. 69n.51
Fauconnier, G. 25
Feigin, S. 93n.87
Fensham, F. C. 96
Feyaerts, K. 22n.62
Fillmore, C. 25n.77
Firmage, E. 178n.66
Fleet, W. F. 133n.65
Fludernik, M. 6n.28
Foreman, B. 14n.28, 30
Freedman, D. N. 3n.17, 38n.6, 39n.14, 55n.1, 63n.30, 87n.44, 100n.117, 105n.132, 106, 123, 141n.20, 146n.42, 147n.48, 153n.78, 159n.4, 168n.34, 169n.36, 176n.54, 183n.78
Frymer-Kensky, T. 39n.17, 127n.31, n.32

Gandiya, V. 3n.16, 46n.44
Geller, S. 90n.67
Gerleman, G. 74n.76
Glucksberg, S. 16n.37, n.38
Godawa, B. 1n.6
Gordon, R. P. 164n.18
Grady, J. 25n.76, n.78
Grant, J. 50, 51
Grayson, A. 85n.32, n.37
Greenberg, M. 89n.56
Guillaume, P. 133n.68
Gunkel, H. 40, 41n.22, 43n.27, 44, 62n.22, 76n.81, 115n.1, 127n.33, 133n.67, 134n.72, 141n.19, 148n.54, 149, 153n.77, 163n.17, 202

Haag, H. 184n.81
Hamp, V. 85n.34
Harshav, B. 16, 17n.41, 26, 27, 28n.88, 31n.102, 35, 36, 37, 56n.7
Hayes, E. 24n.74
Hertzberg, H. 52n.68
Hilber, J. 65n.37, 67n.43
Hillers, D. 96, 97n.103, 103n.129
Hirsch-Luipold, R. 2n.9
Hoffner, H. 99n.109
Hossfeld, F.-L. 4n.19, 43n.29, 62n.25, 79n.2, 98n.108, 100n.117, 108n.140, 123n.22, 129n.45, 133n.67, 134n.78, 138, 143n.27, 144n.36, 145n.40, 147n.50, 151, 152, 155n.84, 163n.17, 167n.29, 202, 211n.4
Houtman, C. 93n.88
Huffmon, H. B. 170n.40, n.41
Hugger, P. 63n.30
Hunter, A. 55n.1, 56
Hunter, J. H. 3n.16, 5, 79n.2
Hurvitz, A. 39n.16

Jackson, G. 56n.6
Janowski, B. 76n.83, n.84
Jeremias, J. 3n.16, 45, 46n.40, n.43, 86n.40
Johnson, A. 48, 49, 134n.79
Johnson, M. 2n.11, 10n.5, 11n.6, 22, 23n.64

Kalthoff, B. 108n.140
Kapelrud, A. S. 177
Kearney, R. 11n.8
Kedar-Kopfstein, B. 66n.39
Keel, O. 2, 18, 62n.25, 63, 64, 67n.41, 70n.52, 72n.63, 73n.67, 74, 82n.13, 95, 99n.110, n.113, n.114, 130, 131n.53, 149n.62, n.63, 150, 159, 160, 161n.13, 171, 196
Kellerman, D. 131n.57
Keysar, B. 16n.38
King, P. 24, 67, 75, 131n.59
Kitchen, K. 85n.32
Kittay, E. 10n.4, 14n.25, 16n.40, 21, 22n.58, n.61, 24, 30
Klein, E. 93n.86
Klingbeil, M. 2n.8, 4, 5n.24, 6n.29
Knowles, M. 63n.27
Koch, K. 120n.14, 126, 204n.23
Kotzé, Z. 24n.74
Köckert, M. 46n.43, 79n.1
Kövecses, Z. 22n.62
Kraus, H.-J. 38n.6, 46n.46, 57n.9, n.10, 67n.41, 69n.47, 86n.39, 101, 126, 133n.67, 165, 167n.29, 176n.56, 183n.78, 195n.2, 210n.3
Krecher, J. 85n.34
Kuntz, J. K. 4n.22, 89n.56, 93n.90, 152n.73, 154n.80, 192n.1
Kwakkel, G. 120n.15, n.16

Labuschagne, C. J. 137, 140n.15
LaCoque, A. 36n.2
Lambert, W. 69n.49, n.50, 90n.63
Lakoff, G. 2n.11, 10n.5, 11n.6, 22, 23, 24n.72
Langacker, R. 28n.89
Leezenberg, M. 16
Levin, S. 14, 15n.29
Levinson, S. 28, 32n.104
Lichtheim, M. 75n.80
Lipinski, E. 177n.61
Loewenstamm, S. 82n.21, 84n.27, 86n.40
Longacre, R. E. 141n.20
Low, K. 142n.21
Lyons, J. 21n.56

Macintosh, A. A. 102, 127n.34
Macky, P. 9, 12, 15n.31, 18, 19n.46, n.47, 76
Maiberger, P. 133n.67
Mann, T. 46n.43, 201n.20
Maré, L. 3n.16
Mayer, G. 87n.47
May, H. G. 107n.136
Mays, J. 51n.61, 177, 205n.25
McCarter, P. 72n.60, 147n.48, 148n.54
Milgrom, J. 178n.66
Millard, A. 90n.63
Miller, P. 11n.11, n.12, 50, 85n.36, 96, 100n.115
Moran, W. L. 146
Moughtin-Mumby, S. 14, 15n.31, 30n.97
Mowinckel, S. 44, 45, 46n.45, 48, 49, 89, 129n.41, n.46, 196

Naudé, J. 96n.99
Newsom, C. 85n.34

Niehaus, J. 86n.40
Nielsen, K. 2n.8, 15n.31, 23n.70, 32, 79n.2, 80
Noth, M. 131n.57

Oakley, T. 25n.76, n.78
O'Connor, M. 63n.30
Ortlund, E. 80, 197n.9
Ortony, A. 12, 20n.50

Pardee, D. 84n.30
Parpola, S. 85n.31, 96n.98
Paschen, W. 117n.9, n.10
Peels, H. G. M. 179, 180, 199n.15
Petruck, M. 25n.81
Pinker, A. 148n.55, 149n.61

Reider, J. 147n.48
Reif, S. 102n.124
Richards, I. A. 20
Ricoeur, P. 5n.27, 6n.28, 9n.3, 11n.9, n.10, 12n.16, 13n.19, n.22, 14n.25, 15n.33, 23, 29, 35, 36n.2, 105, 197, 212
Ridderbos, J. 177n.61
Ringgren, H. 99n.111, 146n.44, 176
Robar, E. 141n.20

Sæbø, M. 109n.144, n.145, 144n.33
Sanders, P. 58n.14, 130n.52
Sarna, N. 84n.30
Sass, B. 89n.62
Sawyer, J. 62n.23, 165n.21
Schäfer, H. 149n.63
Scharbert, J. 177n.65
Schmuttermayr, G. 3n.17, 55n.1, 87n.44, 148n.54, 167n.29, 168, 176n.60, 178n.67, 183n.79
Schnider, S. 152n.71
Schökel, A. 1,2n.8
Searle, J. 15n.33, 16
Seebass, H. 106n.135
Seybold, K. 40n.21, 43n.27, 72n.63, 94n.91, 101n.120, 105n.132, 115, 124n.25, 133n.67, 137, 139, 143n.26, 147n.50, 152n.73, 167n.29, 186n.86
Shead, S. 28, 29, 30, 31
Sheppard, G. 52n.66
Slomovic, E. 38n.8, 39n.9, n.10, 133n.66
Smelik, M. and Smelik, W. 142n.23
Soskice, J. 11n.10, 12, 15n.32, 17n.42, n.43, 20n.49, 105n.132, 123n.23
Spoer, H. 39n.15
Steinhart, E. 10n.4, 14n.25, 30n.100
Stendebach, F. J. 153n.75, 161n.12
Stern, J. 6n.28, 15n.32, 32n.104
Stienstra, N. 24n.73
Stovell, B. 25n.79
Streck, M. 99n.109
Stuart, D. 90n.67

Tallqvist, K. 82n.22, 140n.17
Tate, M. 62n.25
Tendahl, M. 16n.36, 25n.80
Tsumura, D. 83n.24, 195n.5
Turner, M. 2n.11, 22n.59, 23n.63, 24n.72, 25

Uehlinger, C. 89n.62

Van der Merwe, C. 24n.74
Van der Velden, F. 98n.108
Van Hecke, P. 2n.8, 25n.79
Van Steenbergen, G. 28
Van Wolde, E. 1n.6, 24n.74
Vesco, J. 52n.66
Von Rad, G. 120, 206n.26
Vriezen, Th. C. 176n.57

Wagner, M. 39n.16
Ward, J. M. 49n.57
Watson, G. 89n.57, 101n.119
Watson, R. S. 195n.5
Watts, J. 52, 53, 206n.28
Weinfeld, M. 93n.86
Weiser, A. 3n.18, 38n.6, 46, 47, 48, 86n.40, 103n.127
Weiss, A. 3n.15, 6n.30, 9n.1
Westermann, C. 41, 86n.40, n.41
Whedbee, J. 52n.68
White, R. 22n.61
Widengren, G. 176n.56, 177n.62
Wiig, A. 64, 151, 154
Williams, P. 62n.24
Williams, R. J. 153n.79
Williamson, H. 110n.147
Winton Thomas, D. 72
Wood, A. 90

Yadin, Y. 85n.36

Zanella, F. 28n.89, 31
Zehnder, P. 143n.30
Zenger, E. 43n.29, 62n.25, 79n.2, 100n.117, 123n.22, 129n.45, 133n.67, 134n.78, 138, 143n.27, 144n.36, 145n.40, 147n.50, 151, 152, 155n.84, 163n.17, 167n.29, 202, 211n.4
Zobel, H.-J. 97n.106

INDEX OF TEXTUAL REFERENCES

Biblical Texts

Genesis

1.18 92n.80
1.29 110
2.6 109n.145
3.6 121
3.14 166
3.15 187
3.22 105
3.24 90
6.9 120n.14
6.13 181
12.7 187
12.8 87
13.7 169
13.16 144n.35
14.19 97
15.17 84
17.1 120n.14, 124
17.12 172
17.27 172
18.19 117, 203
19.4 74n.73
20.5 116, 117, 124
21.23 123
24.61 89n.58
26.17 70
30.8 126
34.9 122n.21
34.21 120
34.29 59
35.7 101
37.10 102
37.23 122n.23
37.35 73n.70
38.9 187
40.3 75
42.15 176n.55
42.35 168
42.38 73n.70
44.4 157n.1
47.6 59
49.15 87
49.19 132n.64
49.23 99
49.26 82
50.15 116n.6

Exodus

2.10 106
3.8 88n.48
4.4 105
4.20 89n.58
6.6 87n.46
6.14 170
9.18 97
9.23 95
9.24 95
10.17 74n.75
10.21–22 92
12.43 172
13.3 59
14.4 59
14.9 157n.1
14.24–25 99, 100
15 39, 41
15.6 151n.69
15.8 103
15.9 157n.1
15.10 107n.138
15.13 59
15.14 172
17.7 169
18.10 177
18.11 71n.54
18.18 173
18.20 117
18.25 170
19 86, 88n.48
19.11 88n.48
19.16 47, 92n.79, 99
19.18 47, 84, 86, 88n.48
19.20 88n.48
20.21 88n.51
20.26 101
21.19 110
21.20 180
21.23–25 127
23.1 66, 184
23.27 100, 163
24 86
24.17 86
25.20 90
25.25 175

28.32 87
28.43 120
29.46 111
30.36 165, 167
32.8 119
32.13 187
33.9ff. 47
33.22 62
34.5 47, 88n.48

Leviticus
11.14 91
14.8–9 117
14.40 112
15.5 117n.9
15.16 187
16.2 47
16.30 117n.10
18.5 203
18.26 203
19.18 180n.69
22.25 172
24.19–20 127
25.27 116

Numbers
1.6 63
3.35 63
7.7 115n.4
7.54 63
10.35 108
11.1 84n.28
18.6 101
19.7 117n.9
19.8 117n.9
19.19 117n.9
20.17 143
20.20 129n.42
21.18 110
21.22 143
23.9 62
24.7 178
24.8 98
25.15 63
30.2 170
31.2 180
31.3 179

Deuteronomy
1.28 82n.17
2.10 129n.42
2.15 99, 100n.116
2.36 66
4.1 146
4.8 118
4.11 88n.49, n.51, 92n.79
4.17 90n.70
4.44 118
5.22 88n.51
5.26 176n.58
6.17–18 121n.19
6.25 203
7.16 74n.75, 85
7.22 158n.2
8.2 152
8.6 117
9.3 85
9.16 117
10.12 117
11.8 59
11.22 117
13.14 71n.56
13.19 121n.19
17.19–20 119
18.13 120
19.6 157n.1
19.16 66, 184
19.21 127
21.6 116
23.1 101
26.13 206
28.9 117
28.13 170
28.14 119
28.21 158
28.45 157n.1, 158
28.49 91
28.52 75
29.4 174
31.6 59
31.17 75n.78
31.21 75n.78
31.23 108
31.29 121n.19
31.30 57n.10
32 41
32.2 138
32.3–4 140
32.4 124, 138
32.4–6 126
32.5 125
32.8 97
32.13 146
32.15 140
32.22 73n.70, 82n.14
32.27 63, 129
32.30–31 63
32.31 140

32.35 109, 154n.80
32.37 63, 140
32.37–38 139n.13
32.39 130, 159
32.42 98
33.2 87
33.11 159, 160
33.15 82
33.26 88, 89n.60, 93n.88
33.29 146, 172

Joshua
1.6 59
1.7 59
1.9 59
1.18 59
2.9 82n.17
2.12 123
2.14 123
3.10 176n.58
6.4 74n.72
7.9 74n.72
7.12 163
8 158
8.3 163
8.8 85
8.19 85, 132n.63
8.20 66, 84n.29
10.10 100n.116
10.11 95, 99n.112
10.13 179, 180
10.24 164
10.26 164
11.11 85
17.13 59
22.5 117
23.13 74
24.7 92n.80

Judges
1.23 141n.19
1.28 59
3.2 146
3.12 59
3.21 105
4.3 59
4.14 163
4.15 99n.112, 100
5 39, 41
5.4 45, 81, 82, 87, 93
5.8 63n.29
5.11 180
5.21 59, 71
5.26 159
5.27 163
6.21 110
6.27 106n.135
7.18 97
9.24 181
10.4 89n.58
10.16 119
11.1 59
11.25 169
11.27 180
11.36 179, 180
12.2 169
12.14 89n.58
15.7 180
15.8 61n.20, 63
15.11 63
16.2 74n.73
16.23f. 41
16.26 110n.149
16.28 180
19.5 151
19.22 71n.56, 74n.73
20.5 74n.73
20.13 71n.56
20.45 63
20.47 63
21.3 63

1 Samuel
1.16 183n.80
2 53
2.1 54, 65n.35, 140
2.2 62n.25, 63, 130n.50, 140
2.4 141, 148, 149
2.4–5 54
2.6 130
2.8 54, 128n.40
2.9 54, 92
2.10 54, 65n.35, 97, 186
2.12 71n.56
2.30 126
4.3 57n.13
5.11 100n.116
5.12 165
7.10 97, 100
9.16 186
10.5 70
10.24 176
10.27 71n.56, 183n.80
11.3–11 165
11.11 99
12.7 180
13.6 61n.20

13.14 170
14.15 82
14.24 179, 180
14.37 152
14.45 186
15.18 158
15.20 143
15.22 112
15.24 10
16 186
16.18–23 38
17.20 97
17.22 132
17.26 176
17.36 176
17.48 132
18.25 180
18.29 57n.11
19.2 92
19.17 57n.11
20.8 123
20.14 123
20.20 98
22.4 39
22.4–5 52, 62
23.2 138n.6, 211
23.4 138n.6
23.14 39, 52
23.19 39, 52
23.25 52, 62
23.28 52, 62, 63
23.29 39
24.22 62
24.23 52
25.17 183n.80
25.25 183n.80
25.30 170
26.23–24 122
28.6 152
28.15 152
30.8 39, 138n.6, 157n.1, 158, 211
30.8–20 133
30.17 89n.58, 158
30.22 71n.56, 183n.80

2 Samuel
1.19 145
1.21 63n.29
1.25 145
2.5 123
2.14 163
2.18 145
3.22 132n.64
4.2 132n.64
4.8 57n.11, 179
5.7 62
5.9 62
5.17 62
5.19 138n.6, 211
5.20 71
6.6 105n.132
7.12 187
7.14–16 122
8.9 171
10.2 123
10.19 171
11.11 92n.84
13.5 124
14.7 131
14.17 110
15.26 112
16.12 116
16.16 176
18.3 66
18.9 89n.58
18.15 74n.73
18.19 180
18.22 133
18.28 177
18.31 180
19.4[3] 66
19.10[9] 57n.13
20.1 71n.56, 183n.80
21.1 52
21.1–14 52
21.5 158n.2
21.15 52, 133
21.15–22 38, 52
21.18 52
21.19 52
21.20 52
21–24 52
22 52
22.1 205
22.2 58
22.2–3 52
22.3 52n.66, 54, 141n.18, 184
22.4 52n.66
22.5 52n.66, 69, 71n.56
22.6 70
22.8 81n.8
22.11 90n.66
22.12 88n.55, 91n.77, 92
22.14 53, 97n.104
22.15 99
22.16 100n.117

22.21–25 53
22.23 118, 203
22.28 52n.66, 54
22.29 13, 130, 131n.55, 132
22.30 133
22.32 52n.66, 54, 63, 140
22.33 141n.18
22.34 52n.66, 145
22.36 52n.66, 151, 152
22.40 54
22.42 52n.66, 66
22.43 166, 167
22.45 171
22.46 173
22.47 52n.66, 65
22.48 182
22.49 52n.66, 54, 184
22.50 185n.83
22.51 52n.66, 54
23.1 52n.66, 186
23.1–7 38
23.3 52n.66, 62n.22, 116
23.5 52n.66, 186
23.6 52n.66
23.8–39 38, 52
24.1–25 52
24.31 147n.50

1 Kings
1.33 89n.58
1.34 186
1.38 89n.58
1.44 89n.58
2.3 117
2.7 123
3.9 129n.42
3.14 117
5.17 74n.72, 161
7.28–29 175
8.7 90
8.12 88n.51, 92, 92n.79
8.37 75
9.4 120n.13
10.9 112
11.6 121n.19
11.12 176
11.36 131
13.7 151
13.13–14 89n.59
15.4 131, 146
15.5 119, 121n.19
15.26 121n.19
15.34 121n.19
17.4–7 71
18.44 87n.45
18.45 91n.75, 93
19.2 144n.35
19.11 61
20.12 92n.84
20.23–24 145
21.10 71n.56, 183n.80
21.13 183n.80
22.11 158
22.43 119

2 Kings
4.29 110, 142
4.31 110
6.23 132n.64
8.18 121n.19
9.24 163
10.15 120
11.1 181n.73
11.2 106n.135
11.4 106n.135
11.19 106n.135
13.5 165
13.7 166
13.20 132n.64
14.13 133
18.21 110
18.23 89n.58
19.16 87n.43
19.16–19 176
19.22 129
19.32 63n.29, 65, 74, 109
25.5 99
25.5–6 158

Isaiah
1.16 116n.8, 121
1.16–17 121
1.20 84
1.25 138
2.10 62
2.11 129, 130
2.21 61n.20
3.1 110
3.12 72
3.15 129n.44
4.5 47, 84, 94
4.6 92
5.1 65, 66
5.14 73
5.15 129, 130
5.20 92

5.24 138n.5
5.25 82n.16, 168
5.28 10, 147
5.29 102
5.30 92
6.2 90n.70
6.4 84
7.19 61n.20
8.11 59
8.14 74n.76
10.4 163
10.12 129
10.17 131n.55
10.20 110
11.1 15
11.4 84
11.5 116
11.12 15
11.14 90
13.11 130
14.16 84
14.29 90n.70
14.31 84n.29
14.32 129n.43, n.44
16.3 144n.35
17.12 107
17.13 102, 167
19.1 88, 89n.58, 93
19.3 72
21.4 73
21.22 59
24.4 173
24.18 81, 106
24.20 81n.11
24.21 106
25.3 129n.42
25.4 129
25.12 66
26.13 140
27.1 197
28.16ff. 62n.25
28.25 99
29.6 86n.38, 97
30.7 196
30.12–13 110
30.18 178
30.27 84
30.30 85, 95
30.33 84, 103
32.1 116
33.14–16 117
34.10 84n.29
34.13 147n.50
35.4 116n.6, 180
35.6 133, 144
36.8 110
37.23 129
37.33 65, 74, 109
38.10 73
38.18 73
40.7 173
40.10 59
41.2 166
41.10 109
41.11 169
41.15 166, 167
41.25 167
43.1 123
43.11 140, 165
43.16 107n.138
43.17 131, 160
44.8 63, 140
45.5 141
45.7 92n.80
45.8 93n.88
45.21 165
46.5 144n.34
47.1 166
47.3 102
48.4 148
48.18 204
49.6 131n.55
49.13 129n.44
49.23 161
50.2 102
50.10–11 131
51.5 116
51.7 204
51.9–10 196
51.21–22 129n.44
53.5 68
55.5 171
57.5 61n.20
57.15 106, 178
58.14 145, 146
59.6 66, 184
59.8 125
59.16 147n.46
59.17 142
59.17–18 180, 181n.72
60.2 88n.50
60.18 66, 184
62.4 112
63.2 144n.31
63.5 147n.46
63.7 115, 116n.6
63.19 84n.28, 87
64.1 84n.28

65.12 153n.75, 163
66.15 91, 102, 103

Jeremiah
1.17 142
2.22 116n.8
2.27 163
3.12 124
4.4 85, 116n.8
4.14 147n.50
5.3 61, 121
5.14 84
5.22 81
6.24 75
8.2 168
8.16 81n.12
9.6 138
9.13 118
9.15 158
10.10 176
10.13 91n.75
10.25 158n.2
11.20 181
13.4 61n.20
13.22 66, 102, 184
13.24 99
15.15 181
16.4 168
16.17 121
16.19 66
18.17 109
18.21 70
20.12 181
20.20 180n.69
23.29 61
25.16 81, 98
25.30 98, 106
25.33 168
26.4 118
29.17 144n.35
31.35 144n.32
32.33 163
33.9 172
39.5 158
44.10 118
46.3 63n.30
46.7 81
46.8 81
46.21 109
47.2 71
48.39 163
48.40 91
48.41 75
48.25 65n.35
49.16 61n.20
49.19 133n.65
49.21 81n.12
49.22 75
49.24 163
49.37 158
50.9 144n.31
50.15 179
50.29 71n.54
50.44 133n.65
50.46 81n.12
51.16 91n.75
51.34 100n.116
51.55 107
51.56 147, 148
52.8 158

Ezekiel
1.4 88, 91n.75, 94n.92
5.6 203
7.11 66, 184
10.3ff. 47
11.6 168
13.11 91n.75
13.13 91n.75
17.14 130
17.20 73n.68
18.5–9 204
18.6–9 116
20.6 111
23.24 63n.30
23.29 102
25.14 179, 180
25.17 179
26.10 81n.12
27.10 63
28.14 90
29.6 110
29.14–15 130
30.22 147
30.24–25 147
38.23 124

Hosea
2.9 157n.1
4.19 91
7.15 147
7.16 148n.56
11.10–11 174
12.3 115, 116n.5, 121n.18
12.15 116n.5
13.4 140, 165

13.14 73
13.15 103
14.9 118n.12

Joel
1.20 100n.118
2.1–2 92n.81
2.4 132n.63
2.7 132n.63, 133
2.9 132n.63
4.16[3.16] 98

Amos
1.4 85
2.14 108
3.5 74n.76
4.13 144n.32, 145
5.18 92n.81
5.20 92n.81
6.5 38
7.4 96
8.8 81, 82n.14
9.5 81
9.10 109

Obadiah
3 61n.20
15 116n.6

Jonah
1.14 165
2.3 44n.31, 73
2.4 69, 71
2.6 69, 71, 82
3.8 165
4.8 120n.16

Micah
1.3 87, 145
1.6 101
3.7 152
3.9 125
4.13 148, 166, 167
5.14 180
6.6 106
6.12–13 181
7.2 123
7.7 179
7.10 167
7.17 174
7.18 112

Nahum
1.3 88, 103
1.4 102
1.5 81, 82n.19
1.6 103
1.11 71n.56
2.2 108
2.14 84n.29, 101
3.5 102
3.16 90n.70

Habakkuk
1.8 90
1.9 184
1.11 110
1.13 117n.10
1.14–15 73n.68
2.5 70, 73
2.17 181
3 197
3.3–15 39
3.4 94n.92
3.6 82
3.8 82n.19, 89n.58
3.11 98
3.13 159, 186
3.15 107n.138
3.17 172
3.18 179
3.19 144, 145, 146

Zephaniah
1.15 92n.81
1.17 166n.27, 168
2.3 129n.43
2.11 172
3.11 129
3.12 129

Haggai
2.22 59

Zechariah
8.4 110
8.23 172
9.3 166n.27, 168
9.9 89n.58
9.14 99
10.5 167
10.6 153n.77
13.9 138

Malachi
2.5 148
2.9 117, 203

Psalms
1 51n.61

1–2 51
1.3 173
2.2 186
2.6–8 186
3.4[3] 131n.56
3.5[4] 153
3.7[6] 177
4.1 111
4.2[1] 75, 111, 116, 153
4.4[3] 123
4.6[5] 124, 131n.55
5.6 121
5.13 131n.56
6.1 56
6.6 70, 73
7 116n.7
7.4–6[3–5] 42
7.6[5] 82n.18, 157n.1, 177
7.9[8] 42
7.11[10] 139n.11
7.17[16] 66, 184
8.3[2] 180n.69
9.5[4] 42n.25
9.6[5] 102
9.14[13] 44n.31, 70
9.16 70n.53, 73n.68
9.19 177
10 129
10.9 70n.53
11.6 85, 96
12 129
12.2 123
12.5 129
12.7 139
12.8 131n.55
13.4 153
13.6 116n.6, 186
14.5–6 129n.47
15 50
15.2 119, 134n.71
15.3–5 116
15–24 50, 117, 204, 205
16 50
16.1 124
16.8 119
16.10 123
17 50, 116n.7
17.3–5 42
17.6 87, 153
17.7 152
17.11 74n.71
17.13 163
18.1 38, 41, 42, 57
18.2[1] 39, 41, 58, 67, 108, 189, 191, 208
18.2–3[1–2] 42, 56, 94, 110, 191, 201, 202, 205
18.2–4[1–3] 41
18.2–20[1–19] 56, 193
18.2–32[1–31] 40
18.3[2] 13, 17, 20, 23, 32, 54, 59, 60, 61, 62n.26, 66, 67, 75, 124, 128, 139, 140, 150, 154, 155, 169, 170, 177, 178, 182, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192, 205, 209
18.3–4[2–3] 175
18.4[3] 57, 60, 68, 108, 164, 181, 183, 186, 194, 211
18.4–7[3–6] 43, 56, 76, 79, 201
18.4–20[3–19] 42
18.5[4] 21, 43, 69, 70, 77, 101, 192
18.5–6[4–5] 19, 41, 48, 76, 77, 79, 82, 100, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 111, 112, 113, 145, 154, 175, 194, 195, 196, 208
18.5–7[4–6] 41
18.5–18[4–17] 69
18.5–20[4–19] 40, 48
18.6[5] 77, 92, 109, 192, 196
18.7[6] 10, 41, 43, 46n.46, 60, 68, 74, 75, 79, 87, 111, 140, 152, 164, 165, 192
18.8[7] 40, 43, 57n.12, 73, 79, 81–84, 98, 100, 101, 103, 104, 174, 176, 196, 199
18.8–9[7–8] 23, 102
18.8–16[7–15] 39, 40, 41, 43, 45, 56, 104–105, 157, 181, 185, 201, 202, 209, 210
18.8–20[7–19] 41, 79
18.9[8] 24, 84–86, 94, 96, 97n.104, 100, 103, 104, 199
18.9–12[8–11] 94
18.10[9] 43, 46n.46, 75, 86–88, 92, 93, 104, 192, 194
18.11[10] 47, 88–91, 104, 166, 192, 208
18.12[11] 47, 87, 88, 104, 165, 166
18.13[12] 85, 94–97, 99, 102, 104, 132, 199

18.13–16[12–15] 98
18.14[13] 54, 97–98, 102, 103, 104, 194, 199
18.14–16[13–15] 94
18.15[14] 85, 96, 97, 98–100, 104, 106, 163
18.16[15] 79, 82, 85, 97, 100–104, 107, 190, 192, 195, 199, 208
18.17[16] 43, 48, 60, 61, 69, 105–108, 107, 112, 113, 152, 170, 178, 194, 195
18.17–18[16–17] 183
18.17–20[16–19] 41, 43, 56, 77, 105, 112–113, 155, 169, 201
18.18[17] 57, 59, 106, 108–109, 112, 143, 164, 183, 190, 194
18.18–19[17–18] 60, 68, 79
18.19[18] 57, 74, 108, 109–110, 112, 113, 151, 190, 196
18.20[19] 58, 62, 74, 75, 79, 111–112, 120, 122, 154, 190, 192, 199, 208
18.20–31[19–30] 199
18.21[20] 115, 116, 119, 181n.72, 197, 203
18.21–25[20–24] 41, 42, 47, 49n.56, 56, 110, 112, 115–122, 134, 137, 181, 186, 190, 199, 201, 203, 205
18.21–28[20–27] 112, 194
18.21–30[20–29] 56, 115–135, 137
18.21–31[20–30] 44, 210
18.21–32[20–31] 42, 59, 202, 204
18.21–33[20–32] 154
18.22[21] 117–118, 119, 120, 140, 155n.84, 190, 194, 203
18.22–23[21–22] 205
18.22–24[21–23] 134, 143
18.23[22] 118–119, 120, 121, 203
18.24[23] 119–120, 123, 124, 194, 203
18.25[24] 116, 121–122, 181n.72, 199, 203
18.26[25] 39, 120, 122–124, 186, 203
18.26–27[25–26] 123, 128, 137, 199, 206
18.26–28[25–27] 41, 60, 115, 135, 179, 181, 201
18.26–30[25–29] 56, 122–135, 203, 204
18.26–31[25–30] 122
18.26–32[25–31] 123n.22, 129n.45, 211
18.27[26] 124–128, 203
18.28[27] 39, 41, 54, 61, 128–130, 181, 184, 194, 201
18.28–32[27–31] 201
18.29[28] 18, 60, 61, 94, 130–132, 191, 208
18.29–30[28–29] 41, 115, 130, 191
18.29–33[28–32] 140
18.30[29] 39n.10, 108, 132–134, 144, 191
18.31[30] 42, 60, 120, 124, 137–139, 150, 152, 154, 155n.84, 178, 190, 193, 194, 205
18.31–32[30–31] 41, 137
18.31–33[30–32] 179
18.31–37[30–36] 56, 154–155
18.31–46[30–45] 151, 154
18.31–51[30–50] 56
18.32[31] 39, 49n.56, 54, 63, 120, 130n.50, 139, 165, 179, 197, 205
18.32–37[31–36] 42
18.32–48[31–47] 41n.24
18.33[32] 60, 108, 119, 120, 137, 144, 146, 155, 162, 168, 179, 191, 194, 205
18.33–35[32–34] 141, 144n.32, 185
18.33–49[32–48] 44
18.33–42[32–41] 42, 201
18.33–51[32–50] 40
18.34[33] 13n.18, 39, 60, 61, 62, 106, 133, 144–146, 153, 154, 161, 169, 170, 178, 191, 193
18.34–37[33–36] 155, 170
18.34–49[33–48] 193
18.35[34] 13, 144, 146–149, 168, 191
18.35–36[34–35] 155
18.36[35] 137, 139, 149–153, 154, 155, 168, 179, 186, 190, 191, 193
18.36–37[35–36] 155
18.37[36] 62, 75, 112, 144, 153–154, 161, 168, 193
18.38[37] 39n.10, 57, 133, 145, 157–159, 164, 165, 168
18.38–41[37–40] 60, 68
18.38–43[37–42] 40, 42, 155, 157, 161, 202

18.38–46[37–45] 56, 155, 175
18.39[38] 159–161, 168, 193
18.39–40[38–39] 128, 161, 164, 166, 181, 182
18.40[39] 54, 61, 162–163, 168, 178, 191, 193
18.41[40] 57, 100, 163–164, 179
18.42[41] 140, 152, 164–165, 177, 186
18.42–50[41–49] 42
18.43[42] 161, 165–168, 208
18.44[43] 62, 168–171, 178, 182, 183, 184, 191, 193, 199
18.44–46[43–45] 40, 42, 157, 170, 182, 185, 201
18.45[44] 10, 171–173, 175, 208
18.46[45] 39, 173–175, 196
18.47[46] 58, 62n.26, 128, 139, 140, 150, 175–179, 183, 186, 190, 193, 205
18.47–51[46–50] 42, 56, 187, 201
18.48[47] 39, 137, 140, 144n.32, 163, 178, 181, 182, 184, 194, 199
18.48–49[47–48] 185
18.49[48] 41, 54, 57, 61, 66, 97, 108, 178, 182–185, 192, 194, 200, 201
18.50–51[49–50] 49n.56, 185–187
18.51[50] 40, 42, 54, 60, 97, 116, 128, 144n.32, 191, 197
18–19 51
18–21 51
19 50, 51, 206
19.8–10 155n.84, 206
19.9 125
19.14 124
19.15 62n.26
20 45, 50, 206
20.3 151
20.6 151n.69, 186n.84
20.7 65, 186
20.7–10 186n.84
21 45, 50, 206
21.4–5[3–4] 186
21.8[7] 97
21.9[8] 108
21.11[10] 187
21.14[13] 178
22 50
22.7[6] 15
22.9[8] 112
22.14[13] 102
23 50
23.4 110
24 50
24.4 116, 117
24.5 117
25 129
25.5 65, 179
25.8 146
25.16 129n.47
25.17 75
25.21 120n.13
26 116n.7
26.1 42, 154n.81
26.3 118
26.3–8 42
26.6 116
27.1 131n.55
27.9 65
27.12 180
28.1 62n.25, n.26
28.4 116n.5, 121n.18
28.7–8 59
28.8 68, 186
29.3 107
29.7 84, 86n.38, 97n.104
29.8 82
30 41n.23
30.1 58
30.4[3] 73n.69
30.12[11] 142
31.2–5[1–4] 124
31.3[2] 62, 63, 68, 141n.18
31.4[3] 62
31.5[4] 73n.68, 111
31.8[7] 75
31.8–9[7–8] 111
31.9[8] 146
31.21[20] 92
31.22[21] 177
31.24[23] 129n.47
31.24–25[23–24] 130
31.25[24] 59
32 195
32.2 120
32.6 71, 107, 123
32.6–7 42, 92n.83
34 41n.23
34.7–8 129n.47
34.8 42
34.16 42
34.18 42

34.22 128n.39
35 116n.7
35.2 63n.30
35.4 115n.4
35.11 180
35.26 142
36.1 38, 57n.8
36.6[5] 186
37.2 173
37.11–12 129n.43
37.17 147
37.31 154n.81
37.37 120n.13
38.4 15
40 116n.7
40.3 62, 146
40.13 69
41.12ff. 42n.25, 112
42.2 100n.118
42.8[7] 69, 71
42.10[9] 62
44 116n.7
44.4[3] 147n.46
44.17[16] 180n.69
44.18–22[17–21] 42
45.6 161
45.8 134n.71
45.17 170
46 195
46.3 196
46.6[5] 62n.25
46.7[6] 98
46.11[10] 178
47.3[2] 178
47.4[3] 161, 181
48.4[3] 62n.25, 66
49.15[14] 73n.69
49.16[15] 73
50 47
50.2 84
50.2–4 86n.42
50.3 86n.38
51.4[2] 120
52.1 57n.11
54.1 57n.11
55.9[8] 62n.22
57.1 57n.11
57.2 63
57.3 97
57.6 178
57.10–12 185
57.12 178
59.1 57n.11
59.2[1] 108
59.5[4] 132n.63
59.10[9] 66n.40
59.12[11] 65, 182n.75
59.16[15] 66
60.4 81
60.5 81n.10
60.7 112
60.7–8 152
61.3[2] 15, 62n.25
61.5[4] 63, 92n.83
61.9[8] 185
62 66
62.3 66
63.9[8] 152
64.5[4] 70n.53
64.6[5] 74n.75
65.7[6] 142n.22
65.8[7] 196
66.3 172
66.4 185
66.9 154n.80
66.10 138
66.18 122
66.18–19 42
67.3[2] 138
68 41, 47
68.1 99
68.2 108
68.2–5 86n.42
68.5 88, 89n.60
68.8 81
68.11 129
68.21–22 159
68.24 168
68.34 88, 89n.60
68.35 93n.88
69.1 71
69.23[22] 70n.53
69.24[23] 154n.81
69.25[24] 82n.18
71.3 62, 68
72.4 128
72.9 166
72.9–11 172
72.18 177
73.1 117
73.13 116
73.27 164n.20
74 195
74.15 195
74.16 92n.80
75.5–6[4–5] 65
75.8[7] 65, 128n.40, 130
75.11[10] 65

76.4 148n.60
76.7–8 102n.125
77 46, 47, 197
77.14 138
77.17 82
77.18 93, 98, 99
77.19 81, 98, 99
77.20 107n.138
78.48 95n.95
79.6 82n.18
79.9–10 181
80.18[17] 109
81 172
81.8[7] 92n.83
81.16[15] 172
82.5 82n.14
84.12[11] 120, 139
86.2 123
87.4 196
88.8[7] 69, 152
88.17[16] 73
89 48, 49, 129, 195
89.2–3[1–2] 49n.56
89.4[3] 186
89.7[6] 49n.56
89.9–11[8–10] 196
89.19[18] 65
89.20–38[19–37] 122
89.21–28 186
89.22[21] 109, 147n.46
89.24[23] 49n.56, 164
89.27[26] 62n.25
89.29[28] 186
89.29–30[28–29] 49n.56
89.29–38[28–37] 186
89.31ff.[30ff.] 49n.56
89.49[48] 73
89.50[49] 186
91.1 92n.83
91.2 62
91.3 70n.53
91.5 90n.70
93.1 142, 177
93.4 107
94.1–2 181
94.18 151
94.22 66
95.1 65
96.11 97
97 47, 79n.2
97.2 88
97.2–4 86n.38
97.4 99
97.5 82n.15
97.9 178
98.2–3 186
99.2 178
101 48, 49
101.2–3 119
101.5 129
102.20[19] 106
103.7 138
103.10 115, 116
104.2 87, 95
104.3 91, 93
104.4 86n.38
104.5 101
104.6–9 197
104.7 102
104.7–10 101
104.18 61n.19
104.20 92
104.32 84
105.4 59
105.32 95n.95
105.19 138n.5
106.9 102, 103n.126
107.18 70
107.25 91n.75
107.41 66
108.4–6[3–5] 185
108.7[6] 112
109.3 74n.71
109.24 172
110.1 161
110.5–6 159
113.3 68
113.5 130
113.6–8 144n.32
113.7 128n.39
113.7–8 130
116 41n.23
116.3 44n.31, 69n.47, 70
116.5–6 42
116.6 128
116.7–8 116
116.8 112
116.12 116
118 41, 111
118.5 111
118.10 111
118–119 51
119 51n.61, 138n.5
119.1 120
119.6 118
119.11 138
119.15 118
119.35 118

119.38 138
119.114 92n.83, 139n.12
119.117 118, 151
119.140 155n.84
124 195
124.4 107
124.4–5 71, 196
124.6 177
132.12 122, 186
135.7 91n.75
138 41n.23
138.3 152
138.7 105, 152
138.8 128n.39
139.10 152
139.12 92
140 181, 184
140.2 184
140.3 181
140.6 70, 74n.76, 181
140.8 64, 181
140.11 96
140.12 184
140.13 184
141.7 73
141.9 74n.76
143.12 164n.20
144 46, 57n.8, 197
144.1 63, 144n.32, 146
144.2 63, 68, 139n.11, 181n.73, 182
144.5 84
144.6 99
144.7 105n.132, 106n.134, 108, 172n.46
144.10 38, 144n.32
145.1 58
145.17 124
147.6 130
147.15 132n.62
148.8 91

Job
1.1 124
2.3 72
3.6 15
5.11 128
5.11–14 125
5.18 159
5.25 187
6.12 148
7.14 73n.66
8.15 110n.149
9.5–10 144n.32
9.8 145
9.20–22 124
9.25 132n.62
9.30 116n.8
9.34 73n.66
11.4 116n.8
12.4 120n.14
12.24 170
13.22 153n.75
14.19 165
15.25–26 132n.63
15.26 132
16.14 132
17.9 116n.8
18.7 154
19.12 132n.64
20.17 70
20.24 148
21.17 109n.143, 131
22.3[2] 124
22.13–14[12–13] 92n.82
22.29 130
22.30 116n.8, 117
23.11 117, 118, 203
25.11–12 130
26.5–6 130
26.6 101
26.12 159
27.16 166n.27
28.9 82
29.2–3 131
30.27 109
33.12 153
33.26 116n.5
34.20 81
36.4 124
36.27 109n.145
36.29–30 92n.85
37.11 99n.111
37.16 124
38.3 142
38.6 62n.25
38.17 70, 102
38.22–23 95n.96
38.35 98
38.40 92n.84
39.1 61n.19
39.28 61n.19, 62
40.7 142
40.14 151n.69
40.21 92
41 85
41.3 109
42.5 172

Proverbs
1.12 42n.25, 73n.69
1.27 109n.143
2.7 139n.11
2.18 70
3.20 93183
3.31 183
3.32–35
3.34 127
4.11–12 132n.62
4.12 154
5.5 70, 73n.69
6.11 63
6.12 183n.80
6.17 129
6.23 152
7.27 70
8.8 125
8.29 82n.14
10.9 120n.13, 124
11.5 120n.14
11.5–6 126
11.17–20 126
11.20 120, 124, 125
12.14 116n.6
13.14 70, 74
14.27 70, 74
16.6 120
16.27 183
16.28 183
16.29 183, 184
16.31 117
17.20 125
18.7 74n.75
19.28 183n.80
20.9 117n.10, 120n.16, n.17
21.4 129
21.6 70
22.5 125
22.11 117n.10
22.23 127
24.12 115
24.22 109
24.34 63
27.20 73
28.18 120, 125
29.4 146
29.6 74n.75
30.4 73n.69, 87
30.5 139
30.5–6 139
30.12 117n.10
30.26 61n.19
31.20 105

Ruth
2.16 102

Song of Songs
1.4 132n.62
2.8–9 133
2.14 61n.20
5.12 100n.118

Ecclesiastes
11.3 168
9.17 172

Lamentations
2.2 72
2.8 72
2.13 144n.34
3.43–44 92n.82
3.60 180n.69
5.21 144n.31

Esther
6.8 89n.58
6.9 89n.58
8.13 180
9.24 100n.116

Daniel
8.6 132
12.10 125n.27

Ezra
9.12 59

Nehemiah
4.11 98
9.11 107n.138
9.17 140
9.27 165

1 Chronicles
5.18 146
11.5 62
11.15 62
11.16 39n.10
16.22 186
23.25–8 39n.10
24.2 39n.10

2 Chronicles
6.28 75
6.42 186
8.8 158n.2
9.8 146

12.1 59
13.7 71n.56
18.10 158
20.5–12 45, 138
20.14–17 138
20.29 172
22.10 181n.73, 182n.74
26.14–15 95
29.6 163n.16
32.5 98

Sirach
37.26 133
46.17 97

Qumran Texts

1QH
3.29 72n.64, 195n.4
3.32 72n.64
5.39 72n.64
11[3].29–31 72n.64

CD
1.21 169
4.15 72n.64

4Q381
fr.24a+b5 197
4QPsa
1.2.10 72n.64
4QSama 182
11QPsd 122n.21
5/6 Ḥev
Psalms 122n.21

Ugaritic Texts

(KTU)
1.2.I.24 102
1.2.I.32 85
1.2.IV.6 84
1.2.IV.8 88
1.2.IV.9 164n.20
1.3.II.8 164n.20
1.3.III.23 99n.114
1.3.III.26 99n.114
1.3.III.44 164n.20
1.3.IV.25–27 85
1.4.IV.14 89n.62
1.4.V.8 98
1.4.VII.35–36 108n.141
1.4.VII.54–55 92n.80
1.6.II.32 93, 166n.27
1.6.II.34 166n.27
1.6.III.8.20 176
1.6.III.12–13 176
1.13.33–34 96
1.18.25 84
1.18.26 84
1.19.II.38 160
1.86.6 89n.62